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Central themes of American  
life





*Central Themes of American Life*





# CENTRAL THEMES *of* AMERICAN LIFE

BY

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*To my wife*  
**FERNE**  
*and our three children*  
**TIM, JR., MARY, AND MARGARET**



## F O R E W O R D

The themes of this treatise are religious, or border on religion. Correlation of the predominant facts of American history and life made this inevitable.

Someone is quoted as having said in substance (with some historical license) that the colonization of the United States was one of only two great migrations of history which were motivated by a religious purpose, the other having been the migration of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees at the command of God Himself, who told him to go "unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. 12:1). Abraham obeyed "not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8).

The predominant part of the early colonists came to America from the motive of seeking religious freedom, to find a place where they could unmolestedly worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. That paramount motive permeated their whole life in the new land and predetermined most important distinctive characteristics of our life of today which are either directly religious or are the fruits or by-products of religion. The colonists, like Abraham, did not foresee the civic and cultural destination of their migration.

Such inability is not surprising. The prophets of the Old Testament did not fully understand or foresee the culmination of their own inspired foretelling, nor did the apostles understand some of the facts of their Lord's life until afterward (I Pet. 1:10-11, John 12:16).

Neither did John Calvin, Protestant Reformer, foresee that his theological tenets would be the principal factor in developing modern government by the governed. That was an ultimate, though undesigned, result of his system. Our greatest historian of the colonial period, George Bancroft,

denominated Calvinism, in its final development, as "gradual republicanism."

Lord Acton, a great Catholic writer of the nineteenth century, wrote that "religion is the key of history." Another, more recent, writer has said that Christianity is the dynamic element in Western culture (Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 1950). Assuming the foregoing fact as to life in Western nations generally, as well as in our own, the subjects here treated relate to things distinctive of the American way of life.

That "way" is a complexity incapable of precise definition but having evident uniqueness. Certain influences have determined its quality and content. As the discussion proceeds, particular stress will be put upon those contributing factors which have dominated, without intention of dismissing others even though at times that may seem to be the case. The subjects of the themes constitute the prime components of the American way of life, but not the whole of it. The method used in the composition has been chosen so that conclusions may be more readily accepted by the readers, and extensive documentation has been provided.

Crucial historical events and the most typical features of our culture are examined to discover the basic causes or sources. This comprehensive survey discloses the large extent to which they have been essentially providential and religious. I am not advocating that the American way is identical with Christianity, but only that it has major indebtedness to all forms of Christianity, and especially to Protestantism. It is hoped that this book may contribute to the preservation of the memory of the sources and to revive and reinforce the influence of the central themes of American life.

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# I

## *THE HAND OF GOD IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES*

The greatest fact of American history, and of world history, is that God rules in the affairs of men.

The history of the United States, reverently considered, contains surprising confirmations of this most basic fact. To be sure, the history of the ancient Jewish nation exceeds it in this respect.

As to the Jewish nation, we have God's own interpretation of its history. In the Scriptures He repeatedly pulls aside the curtain behind which He stands and tells us that certain events were His doings.

As to our own country, we must make these discoveries "on our own." It is a most thrilling and rewarding piece of detective work for anyone devoutly undertaking it.

Opinions will differ as to particular events but when viewed as a whole every devout student must be astounded at the unmistakable evidences of God's providential care.

In this short treatise the author has attempted to select those instances concerning which there can be the least question. Thus limited, this may seem like an unusual collection of historical events, and so it is. Most often the event occurred only in man's extremity and consisted of something which indubitably was an "act of God."

Many things mentioned will at first seem to the reader to have been trivial. So they have seemed to many writers of our history. Often they have been omitted by

standard historians or have been placed merely in footnotes. But great events have been controlled by slight circumstances when the issue hung in the balance.

The historical incidents here set forth as illustrative of the theme have in the main been selected according to the following tests:

Events to which man did not contribute cannot be credited to man.

Results striven for by man but which could not have been brought about except for some happening which man did not foresee or control cannot be credited to man.

Man cannot be credited with having controlled even that which resulted from his own acts unless the result was contemplated by man.

When it appears that unexpected non-human factors have repeatedly determined beneficial outcomes in times of crises, then that was God's hand.

### BEFORE COLUMBUS

Some events which took place long before America was discovered had a decisive influence on its history later on. These affected other nations as well. It is not within the scope of this discussion to refer to many such events, but a few were so momentous in their effects upon our country that they seem to demand brief mention.

For example, the decision as to whether our civilization was to be Occidental or Oriental was made when the Greeks won the battles of Marathon and Salamis over the Persians in the fifth century B. C. All authorities agree that this issue was of the highest importance, yet the result depended upon facts over which the men engaged had no control.

If the marshes had not been wet on the plain of Marathon<sup>1</sup> and if a storm had not destroyed two hundred of

1. Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles*, p. 20, sec. 20.

the Persian ships at Salamis,<sup>2</sup> the Persians would have won. The season and the ocean "fought for Greece"<sup>3</sup> 2,400 years ago.

In the eighth century A.D. the dominion of Europe was in the balance. The Mohammedans had overrun Spain and the Germanic peoples made their last stand at Tours in France. Here again the outcome was not controlled by the plan or effort of man.

In the midst of a battle a cry arose in the ranks of the Moors "that some of the enemy were plundering the camp: whereupon several squadron of Moslem horsemen rode on to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled,"<sup>4</sup> and the tumult could not be checked until the whole host had taken flight. Since the Cross won over the Crescent at Tours, our civilization and religion were destined to be Christian instead of Moslem. "The Moslems regard . . . [the defeat in the battle of Tours] as one of the great evils that have befallen the human race."<sup>5</sup>

On another occasion they attacked Italy, sailed up the Tiber and besieged Rome. "On attempting to land, they are furiously driven back and cut to pieces. A storm scatters one half of their ships, and, unable to retreat, they are either slaughtered or made prisoners."<sup>6</sup>

In January, 1588, the Spanish Armada was ready to strike England's fleet in a contest which was to determine the naval supremacy of the world. As conditions then were, the victory should have gone to the Spaniards, but for some unexplainable reason the attack was delayed until July the 12th. In the meantime the great Spanish commander, Santa Cruz, had died; a weak successor had

2. Joel Dorman Steele and Esther Baker Steele, *A Brief History of Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern Peoples*, p. 123 (Barnes General History).

3. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

4. Creasy, *op. cit.*, p. 210, sec. 271. "The wrath [and mistakes] of man shall praise thee," Ps. 76:10.

5. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), Vol. V, p. 35.

6. Read, *Hand of God in History*, p. 105.

been chosen on account of favoritism of the monarch; and a storm at Lisbon had scattered and weakened the fleet.<sup>7</sup>

In the sequel England won her great victory. After the battle the commander of the Spanish made the mistake of trying to escape with the remainder of his ships by passage north of Scotland, where "a succession of storms wrecked the whole remaining fleet."<sup>8</sup> Thus it was determined that Anglo-Saxon and Celtic civilization instead of Latin civilization should dominate the modern world. England was thereafter the "Mistress of the Sea."<sup>9</sup> And in England itself the defeat of the Armada "may be called the death-blow of English Catholicism."<sup>10</sup>

The Battle of Waterloo (1815) seems to have made a turn because of a shower of rain which hindered Grouchy in arriving with reinforcements for Napoleon,<sup>11</sup> with the result that his world empire was destroyed. A different outcome of that contest might have established an empire overruling Great Britain and the United States.

Whether that rain was "an act of God" or not, it would be presumptuous arbitrarily to omit it. It may have been the *sine qua non*, the indispensable condition, of the turn of history. It is, with other facts, a part of the circumstantial evidence to be considered by the devout student.

Even the reader who does not follow the course of reasoning of this treatise as to such events will, it is hoped, be interested in the surprising pattern of apparently fortuitous facts which are here assembled and which have contributed to major historical results.

### THE DISCOVERY

Coming now to the direct beginnings of our country, we find, in addition to facts usually stated in historical

7. Creasy, *op. cit.*, p. 307, sec. 425.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 313, secs. 434-35.

9. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

10. Schwill, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 97.

11. Creasy, *op. cit.*, p. 427, secs. 608-9; p. 429, sec. 612.

texts, many controlling facts only in footnotes of historians, or in unorganized notes in logs, or in diaries of officers or individuals.

The principal cause leading to the discovery of America was the cause which operated upon the mind of Columbus to lead him to the invincible determination to sail westward on the Atlantic to reach Asia.

The idea that the world was round was not new then. Hundreds of university students had, no doubt, studied this Pythagorean theory during the century immediately before Columbus matriculated at the university at Pavia.<sup>12</sup> But none of them became possessed of the idea of sailing westward to the East Indies.

Without the operation of the cause upon Columbus' mind to form that purpose America would not then have been discovered. It is the most fundamental fact in our history. It is simply chronicled in a brief notation recording Columbus' "devotion to the sublime enterprise to which he held himself elected from his infancy by the promises of God."<sup>13</sup> "He was riveted in his faith."<sup>14</sup> He said he believed himself "an agent chosen by Heaven to accomplish a grand design."<sup>15</sup> ("The preparations of the heart in man . . . is from the Lord," Prov. 16:1.)

After great effort Columbus secured three ships and manned them for his venture. The obstacle of human prejudice, ignorance, and superstition had made this almost impossible. This difficulty was not less, but greater, after he had embarked on the expedition. The task of keeping those unlettered seamen driving their vessels toward what they feared as the falling-off place seemed to him as apparently insurmountable. The mutinous crews even planned, if necessary, to cast the admiral over-

12. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), Vol. XXII, p. 699; *ibid.*, Vol. XX, p. 970.

13. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 6.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Montgomery, *Student's American History*, p. 5.

board,<sup>16</sup> but in any event to turn back to Spain. It seemed inevitable that the project should fail.

But they did not turn back. What actually happened at the critical moment was that a cloud appeared on the southwestern horizon which the sailors mistook for land.<sup>17</sup> They were thus filled with new hope and courage and the voyage proceeded. ("The wrath [and mistakes] of man shall praise thee," Ps. 76:10.)

Then, after many days, they found no land and all became repossessed of their superstitious fears and their determination to turn back. Again Columbus was baffled. He resorted to every stratagem known to him but without success.

The determining factor in this new extremity was the appearance of birds. This was accepted by his men as proof that land was near.<sup>18</sup> As to this great voyage, it is the historical record: "The voyage was not imperilled by storms." This is a significant fact.

Columbus was a Roman Catholic. There were no Protestants. He came from southern Europe where the people have remained Catholic. He represented the rulers of Spain, whose successors not only remained Catholic but retained an autocratic form of government, and he claimed the lands as their possessions.

The discovery was followed by fortune hunters, colonists and missionaries from Spain setting out for the new country. They naturally followed the course taken by Columbus on his first voyage. Their descendants still inhabit the West Indies, Central America, and South America. The religion, civilization, and government of these regions are today different from those of the United States because those first adventurers went there, whereas the colonists of the seventeenth century, who

16. Steele, *A Brief History of the United States*, p. 23.

17. *Historian's History of the World*, Vol. XXII, p. 429.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 430.

were from the British Isles and northern Europe, came to our shores.

If Columbus had landed on the shores of North America on that first voyage, all would have been different. The direction taken by him from the beginning, if continued, would have brought him here, perhaps to the Carolina coast.<sup>19</sup> But he changed his course twice on the high seas, thereby predetermining the state and nature of the civilization of the North American continent. Those changes were controlled by facts in nature. The cloud which the sailors mistook for land was in the southwestern horizon. The log kept by Columbus records that when it was sighted they directed their ships toward it.<sup>20</sup> Also, when the birds appeared they crossed the path of the ships proceeding toward the southwest. The same record states that they again turned their course to the southwest and followed the birds.<sup>21</sup> Both the cloud and the birds led to the southwest, an uncanny coincidence, with the result that Columbus landed on the island of San Salvador instead of on North America, and the die of America's future culture and civilization was cast.

An interesting parenthesis at this point is the following observation by a great American author:

"It is singular," says Washington Irving, "how much the success of this great undertaking [the discovery of America] depended upon two happy errors, the imaginary extent of Asia to the East, and the supposed smallness of the earth; both, errors of the most learned and profound philosophers, but with-

19. Channing, *Student's American History*, p. 29. "If he had persisted in keeping on the parallel, 720 miles would have brought him to the coast of Florida, a little south of Cape Malabar," John Fisk, *Historical Writings, The Discovery of America*, Vol. II, p. 112.

20. *The Historian's History of the World*, Vol. XXII, p. 429.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 430. "Numerous flights of small birds confirmed his belief that land at the southwest was not far off," John Fisk, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

out which Columbus would hardly have ventured upon his enterprise.”<sup>22</sup>

There is much truth in the remark that “the Mohammedans would have discovered America even centuries before Columbus, had not their fleet been wrecked in a tempest, after clearing the straits of Gibraltar.”<sup>23</sup>

### COLONIZATION

If the United States had been colonized immediately after the discovery of Columbus, even by England and Holland, our traditions, institutions, religion, and government would have been vastly different. There were no Puritans at that time, no Protestants even. Martin Luther was but nine years old and John Calvin had not been born.

The principles of representative government had not yet been developed in any country. (This is more fully discussed in Chapter II.) The time had not yet arrived when this great republic of ours could be founded. The controlling fact here was the delay of more than a century before the settlement of the country was effected.

Had New England been colonized immediately on the discovery of the American continent, the old English institutions would have been planted with the Roman Catholic hierarchy; had the settlement been made under Elizabeth, it would have been before activity of the popular mind in religion had conducted to a corresponding activity of mind in politics.<sup>24</sup>

In the interval the French made attempts to colonize New England. The name of one leader was DeMonts. “Thrice in the spring of 1606 did Depont, his lieutenant, attempt to complete the discovery. Twice he was driven back by adverse winds; and at the third attempt his vessel was wrecked.” DeMonts’ purpose was to establish an

22. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 21.

23. Read, *Hand of God in History*, p. 37.

24. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, pp. 242-43.

agricultural colony. Poutrincourt renewed the design, but met "with disasters among the shoals of Cape Cod."<sup>25</sup>

Out of its chronological order, the following statement is inserted here as evidence of the uniform control of beyond-human factors preventing French colonization of New England either before or after its settlement by the Pilgrims:

At a still later period, a French armament of forty ships of war, under the Duke D'Anville, was destined for the destruction of New England. It sailed from Chebucto, in Nova Scotia, for this purpose. In the meantime, the pious people, apprised of their danger, had appointed a day of fasting and prayer, to be observed in all the churches. While Mr. Prince was officiating in Old South Church, Boston, on this fast day, and praying most fervently that the dreaded calamity might be averted, a sudden gust of wind arose (the day, till then, had been perfectly clear), so violently, as to cause the clattering of the windows. The reverend gentleman paused in his prayer, and looking around on the congregation with a countenance of hope, he again commenced, and with great devotional ardor, supplicated the Almighty to cause that wind to frustrate the object of their enemies. A tempest ensued, in which the greater part of the French fleet was wrecked. The duke and his principal general committed suicide . . . many died with disease, and thousands were drowned. A small remnant returned to France, without health, and spiritless, and the enterprise was abandoned forever.<sup>26</sup>

So it came about that the coming of the Puritans established the type of our civilization. When the fullness of time had come, when the principles of free government had been developed and to some extent experienced, when religious shackles had been loosed, then the experiment was begun. Our present status was then determined; subsequent forms largely evolved from these beginnings.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

26. Read, *op cit.*, pp. 38-39.

### COLONIAL PERIOD

As will be made more evident in subsequent chapters, the most important colony in our early history, so far as influence upon subsequent events and determination of permanent characteristics of our civilization are concerned, was Plymouth colony. Its colonists came over in the *Mayflower* in 1620.<sup>27</sup>

During the first seasons their existence was most precarious, not only on account of hardships and disease (about half of them died in the first winter) but also, at later times, on account of the enmity of the savage inhabitants. Their early protection from this latter danger and from starvation was attributed by them to acts of Providence.

The feeble colony met with no opposition from the Indians. A pestilence had nearly annihilated several tribes inhabiting that portion of the coast, and thus, providentially as the Pilgrims devoutly believed, left a clear place for them to occupy.<sup>28</sup>

A pestilence raged just before the arrival of the Pilgrims, which swept off vast numbers of the Indians. And the newly arrived were preserved from absolute starvation by the very corn which the Indians had buried for their winter's provisions.<sup>29</sup>

During the colonial period there was a great struggle for the continent between the English and the French. The French were established in Quebec and the English in New England and along the Atlantic seaboard to the

27. The *Mayflower* was 30 years old when the voyage was made. The waves were high and the ship rolled, even actually cracked in a big storm. "One of the adventurous settlers had packed a huge iron screw in his knapsack. For what purpose, who knows? Maybe God led him to carry that screw along, for with it the crack was repaired and he and his fellow passengers were saved from a watery end" (Rebecca Phillips in the *United Presbyterian*, March 31, 1957).

28. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States* (by Steele), Vol. I, p. 44.

29. Read, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

south. In this period there was warfare, known as the French and Indian Wars. The situation was so critical for the English that the tide was possibly turned on account of the friendship of the Iroquois Indians.

These Indians inhabited the area where New York state is now located. The incident which alienated them from the French was one of momentous consequences and justifies examination. It resulted from a mistake made by Champlain, the French leader, which has been set forth as follows:

With all his tact, Champlain had committed one act of indiscretion, the effects of which were left as an ill-fated legacy to the little colony which he otherwise nursed so well [the French colony in Quebec]. Seeking to please his Algonquian neighbors upon the St. Lawrence, and at the same time eager to explore the country, the commandant, with two of his men-at-arms, accompanied [in 1609] one of their frequent war-parties against the confederated Iroquois, who lived, for the most part, in New York state and northeastern Pennsylvania. Meeting a hostile band of two hundred and fifty warriors near where Fort Ticonderoga was afterward constructed, Champlain and his white attendants easily routed the enemy by means of firearms, with which the interior savages were as yet unacquainted.<sup>30</sup>

The consequences of this event have been commented upon as follows:

The shot from Champlain's arquebus had determined the part that was to be played in the approaching conflict by the most powerful military force among the Indians of North America. It had made the confederacy of the Iroquois and all its nations and dependencies the implacable enemies of the French and the fast friends of the English for all the long struggle that was to come.<sup>31</sup>

30. Ripley Hitchcock, *Decisive Battles of America*, pp. 27-28.

31. From Elihu Root's Address at Champlain Tercentennial Celebration, 1909.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

We cannot conceive of the success of our Revolutionary War by which we won our independence without our peerless leader, George Washington. Yet so far as human intelligence can perceive, we should not have had him but for a chain of seemingly fortuitous circumstances.

His youthful ambition was to become a sailor on a British man-of-war. Had he entered the British navy, in all probability he would never have identified himself with our Revolution. Because of his age it was necessary for him to have his mother's consent to his enlistment. This was secured orally and all preparations were made, even to placing his baggage aboard ship. But when it came to signing the necessary papers she reconsidered and refused to sign at the very last moment.<sup>32</sup> Thus we, instead of the British, had Washington.

Not only in the war but in the constitutional convention and in the setting up of the government under the constitution Washington also rendered invaluable service. His contemporaries left appraisals of his outstanding work.

"Were it not for one great character [Washington] in America so many men would not be for this government; we do not fear while he lives, but who besides him can concentrate the confidence and affection of all Americans?" (William Grayson, member of the constitutional convention from Virginia).

"Be assured Washington's influence carried this government" (James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson).

"The country was an instrument with thirteen strings, and the only master who could bring out all their harmonious thought was Washington. Had the idea prevailed that he would not accept the presidency, it would have proved fatal" (George Bancroft, historian).

32. Chamberlain, *The Ifs of History*, p. 101.

One recent writer has said that the republic would have been "fatherless without Washington."\*

Washington was preserved for us not only by the act of his mother but also by wonderfully narrow escapes from death on several occasions. Marooned on an island in the Allegheny river in 1753 to which he had barely escaped on floating ice, he was saved only by the river freezing over at the opportune time.<sup>33</sup> On this same journey "an Indian, lying in wait, fired at him only a few paces off, but missing, was captured."<sup>34</sup> At other times two horses were shot from beneath him.<sup>35</sup> Bullets passed through his clothing.<sup>36</sup> At Ft. Duquesne in the French and Indian War, an Indian shot at him with a rifle fifteen times but he was not hit.<sup>37</sup> At the battle of Princeton he sat upon his horse in "the very front of danger," "within less than thirty yards of the British," and when the smoke cleared away, it was thought a miracle that Washington was untouched.<sup>38</sup>

One of those wonderful instances of preservation so characteristic of Washington's career took place during skirmishing near the Brandywine in defense of Philadelphia. "We had not lain long," says Major Ferguson [British officer], of the rifle corps, "when a rebel officer, remarkable by a huzzar dress, pressed toward our army, within a hundred yards of my right flank, not perceiving us. He was followed by another, dressed in dark green and blue, mounted on a bay horse, with a remarkable high cocked-hat. I ordered three good shots to steal near and fire at them; but the idea disgusting me, I recalled the order. The huzzar, in returning, made a circuit, but the other passed within one hundred yards of us, upon which I advanced from the wood toward him. Upon

33. Washington Irving, *Life of George Washington*, Vol. I, pp. 55-56.

34. Steele, *A Brief History of the United States*, pp. 82-83.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. V., p. 494.

my calling he stopped, but after looking at me he proceeded. I again drew his attention and made signs to him to stop, leveling my piece at him; but he slowly cantered away. As I was within that distance at which, in the quickest firing, I could have lodged half a dozen balls in or about him before he was out of my reach, I had only to determine; but it was not pleasant to fire at the back of an unoffending individual who was acquitting himself very coolly of his duty; so I let him alone. The day after, I had been telling this story to some wounded officers who lay in the same room with me, when one of the surgeons, who had been dressing the wounded rebel officers, came in and told us that they had informed him that General Washington was all the morning with the light troops, and only attended by a French officer in a huzzar dress, he himself dressed and mounted in every point as above described. I am not sorry that I did not know at the time who it was."<sup>39</sup>

He never received a wound in battle.<sup>40</sup> A great leader was thus vouchsafed to us.

We had similar good fortune as to other great leaders of that time. They seemed to be at the right places at the right times only by accident.

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, came into the Second Continental Congress to fill a vacancy.<sup>41</sup> Only thus was he there for that great service.

Alexander Hamilton is another illustration of our good fortune resulting from apparently fortuitous circumstances. He was born on the Island of Nevis in the West Indies and we should not have had him if he had not written an outstanding account of a hurricane which swept over the area. Ambrose Spencer, a contemporary, said of his importance to our country that "he thought

39. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States*, Vol. I, pp. 227-28.

40. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

41. Schumaker, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*, p. 59.

out the Constitution of the United States and the details of the government of the Union; and out of the chaos that existed after the Revolution raised a fabric every part of which is instinct with his thought." It has been said of him that he also founded the American system of business and finance. Attention is called to his early Presbyterian training which is mentioned in the following account of the accidental circumstance which brought him to the United States. This is of interest in connection with the fact that he had at hand on his study table the Presbyterian Book of Government when he was drafting the Constitution, as shown in a subsequent chapter.

He [Hamilton] was sent to school scarcely at all. . . . He read much, studied deeply, and received some good training at the hands of Rev. Hugh Knox, a Presbyterian minister.

But all at once there occurred the accident which resulted in his going to the continental colonies. In the late summer of 1772 a fearful hurricane swept over the Leeward Islands. The boy Hamilton, then fifteen years old, had his full share in the adventures attending this calamity, and wrote a long and vivid account of it for a newspaper published at St. Christopher. By this brilliant piece of news work the entire West Indies were electrified. The people there had had plenty of hurricanes before, but none of them had ever been adequately "written up." Young Hamilton awoke one morning to find himself in the enjoyment of a fame which extended all the way from Jamaica to Trinidad.

The immediate result of this notoriety was to convince Alexander's relatives that they possessed in him a prodigy, and to stimulate them to find means to educate him. They raised a fund forthwith without any particular difficulty, and shipped him, armed with a letter of introduction from Rev. Mr. Knox, to Boston, en route to New York. Lacking this assistance, it is unlikely that the youth would have found his way to our shores. . . . The dark-skinned, dark-

eyed, exotic-looking student at King's College . . . became a great leader. . . . The sentiment which governs our republic today is Hamiltonian.<sup>42</sup>

In many wars of the world there have been times of crisis when the whole issue has seemed to hang in the balance and has turned on some chance event. The Revolution is outstanding in this respect. A few instances are here set forth.

On January 2, 1777, the American army was entrapped between the British at Trenton and the Delaware river. The river was filled with floating ice. The Americans could not cross. On all sides the roads were broken up and the artillery could not be moved through the mud. The British could have completed the capture before dark, but they were tired and it was evident to Cornwallis, their commander, that the Americans could not escape. He, therefore, told his men to camp for the night and they would "catch the fox in the morning."

Into the night Washington sat in hopeless counsel with his officers. It was the Revolution's darkest hour (January 2-3, 1777). Not only were the American forces within the clutches of the enemy, but the morale of the country was at a low ebb and the support of the army was most difficult. The following quotations as to these facts are taken from Bancroft, *History of the United States*:

The moment was critical. The defeat of Washington might have crushed independence.<sup>43</sup>

No hope remained to the United States but in Washington. His retreat of ninety miles through the Jerseys, protracted for eighteen or nineteen days, in an inclement season . . . had no principal purpose but to effect delay, till mid-winter and impassable roads should offer their protection. The actors, looking back upon the crowded disasters which overwhelmingly fell on them, knew not how they got through,

42. Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-113.

43. *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 491.

or by what springs of animation they were sustained.<sup>44</sup>

On the twenty-third [December, 1776], he [Washington] wrote for the watch word: "Victory or death."<sup>45</sup>

As the fighting was over, Cornwallis sent his baggage on board the packet for England.<sup>46</sup>

That this was the fact of the situation is corroborated by Steele in *Brief History of the United States* in the following language:

It was a time of deep despondency. The patriot army was a mere handful of ragged, disheartened fugitives. Many people of wealth and influence went over to the enemy. New York and Newport, the second city in size in New England, were already in the hands of the British, who were likely soon to seize Philadelphia.<sup>47</sup>

This was indeed a discouraging picture. The confident British encamped at Trenton, merely waiting until morning to take the helpless Americans. Every resource at our command had been exhausted. "Washington had forty cannon. At night-fall the ground was so soft that he could not move them."<sup>48</sup> Our army was entrapped between the impassable river and the enemy.

However, the escape was effected. Let us look for the key-fact.

Soon after midnight . . . the wind veered to the northwest; the weather suddenly became cold; and the by-road, lately impracticable for artillery, was soon frozen hard,<sup>49</sup> as hard as pavement.<sup>50</sup> To conceal the movement, guards were left to replenish the American camp-fires.<sup>51</sup>

44. *Ibid.*, p. 466.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 475.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 477.

47. *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 118, note.

49. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 492-93.

50. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 118, note.

51. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

Washington moved his forces by a roundabout road to Princeton where at sunrise they routed the British troops, gained a victory, and got beyond pursuit. The army was thus rescued, the tide of battle turned, and the country awakened to new enthusiasm, all by the change of wind at the critical moment.

At other times during the Revolution, both before and after this battle of Princeton, similar deliverances of the American forces occurred. In March, 1776, Boston was in the possession of the British under Howe. Washington attempted the delivery of the town under most unpromising circumstances.

Howe had assured the ministry in England that he "was not under the least apprehensions of any attack from the rebels."<sup>52</sup> Washington had in reserve but one hundred barrels of powder.<sup>53</sup> He had scarcely enough ammunition to supply his few cannon for six or eight days.<sup>54</sup>

He conceived the plan of entrenchments on the heights of Dorchester for the purposes of the siege. This could not be done if the British became aware of it, and for this reason it had to be done in the shortest possible time.

Washington found the ground frozen eighteen inches deep. "A train of more than three hundred carts, easily drawn by oxen over the frozen marshes, brought bundles of screwed hay, to form a cover for Dorchester Neck where it was exposed to a raking fire, and an amazing quantity of gabion and fascines and chandeliers for the redoubts."<sup>55</sup>

The temperature of that night was the fittest that could be for outdoor work; the haze that denotes a softening of the air hung round the base of the ridge; above him, the moon, which that morning

52. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

had become full, was shining in cloudless lustre.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps there never was so much work done in so short a space of time.<sup>57</sup>

However, if the British had attacked immediately on the next day they would have found the American preparations still incomplete. But "a storm prevented an immediate attack, a delay which was well improved by the provincials."<sup>58</sup>

In the afternoon a violent storm of wind came up from the south and about midnight blew with such fury that two or three vessels were driven on shore; rain fell in torrents on the morning of the sixth, so that the movement against the American lines was still further delayed, till it became evident that the attempt must end in the ruin of the British army.<sup>59</sup>

Boston was thereupon evacuated by the British.

Again, in Brooklyn in August, 1776, "the Americans were invested by an army of more than double their number from water to water."<sup>60</sup> Washington "saw that all Long Island was in their hands, except only the neck on which he was entrenched, and that a part of his camp would soon be exposed to their guns; his men were cast down by misfortune, and falling sick from hard service, exposure, and bad food; his force was divided by a channel, more than half a mile broad, and swept by swift tides; on change of wind, he might be encircled by the entrance of the British fleet into the East River."<sup>61</sup>

Retreat was absolutely necessary and was begun in the night, but the council of American officers was of the opinion "that success was not to be hoped for."<sup>62</sup>

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

58. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

59. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 386.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 386.

As day approached, the sea-fog came rolling thickly from the ocean; welcomed as a heavenly messenger, it shrouded the British camp, completely hid all Brooklyn, and hung over the East River without enveloping New York.<sup>63</sup>

When the British officers learned of the retreat "from Brooklyn Heights four boats were still to be seen through the lifting fog on the East River; the fourth, manned by three vagabonds who had loitered behind to plunder, was taken; otherwise the whole nine thousand who were on Long Island, with their provisions, military stores, field-artillery, and ordnance, except a few worthless iron cannon, landed safely in New York."<sup>64</sup>

An interesting fact in connection with this escape is that a woman sympathizer with the enemy, when she discovered that the Americans were embarking, sent her Negro servant to the British lines to inform them of the movement. Fortunately he fell in with the Hessian contingent, who were Germans in the employ of the British. They could not understand a word of his English and merely held him until morning when it was too late for his information to be of any use to them.<sup>65</sup>

On Christmas night, 1776, at Trenton, the Hessian commander, Rall, was enjoying festivities, lulled into a false sense of security by a driving storm of sleet which he assumed made the crossing of the Delaware river by Washington's troops impossible. Wine-drinking and card-playing continued all night.

At dawn a Tory in the area outside Trenton sent a messenger with a note to Rall to inform him of the approach of the Americans. The Negro servant would not admit the messenger, who thereupon sent in a note. It was given to Rall but he, excited by wine and play, thrust it unopened into his pocket. Soon after daybreak the

63. *Ibid.*, p. 387.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Steel, *op. cit.*, p. 115, note.

Americans surprised the Hessians and won a complete victory, capturing nearly a thousand prisoners and killing the Hessian leader,<sup>66</sup> taking twelve hundred small-arms, six brass field pieces (two of which were twelve-pounders) and all the standards of the brigade.<sup>67</sup>

Until that hour, the life of the United States flickered like a dying flame. "But the Lord of hosts heard the cries of the distressed, and sent an angel for their deliverance." — Bancroft quoting the praeses of the Pennsylvania Lutherans.<sup>68</sup>

After Daniel Morgan had won a glorious victory over the British at Cowpens in South Carolina in January, 1781, Cornwallis joined Tarleton in hot haste to punish him. Morgan's forces moved toward Virginia, crossing the Catawba river almost in sight of the British forces.

Night came on, and with it rain, which raised the river so high as to keep the impatient Cornwallis waiting three days.<sup>69</sup>

Greene now joined Morgan's forces in charge of the retreat.

On the second and third of February [1781], the American light infantry, continuing their march, with the British at their heels, crossed the Yadkin at the Trading ford, partly on flats, during the latter part of the time in a heavy rain. After the Americans were safe beyond the river and Morgan had secured all water craft on its south side, it rose too high to be forded. To the Americans it seemed that Providence was their ally.<sup>70</sup>

Just as the Americans had reached the other side, it began to rain.<sup>71</sup>

Cornwallis was forced to lose two days in ascend-

66. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

67. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 483-84.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 484.

69. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

70. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 391.

71. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

ing the Yadkin to the so-called Shallow ford, where he crossed on the seventh.<sup>72</sup>

The safety of the southern states had depended on the success of this retreat of two hundred miles from the Catawba to the north bank of the Dan.<sup>73</sup>

This signal deliverance of Green's exhausted army awoke every pious feeling of the American heart, and was a cause for general thanksgiving.<sup>74</sup>

It was in October of the same year that Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. His forces were there "bottled up with their backs to the York river. Cornwallis . . . found himself effectually blockaded by land and by sea.<sup>75</sup>

As a last resort, Cornwallis attempted to ferry his men across by night to Gloucester, hoping to break through the lines there, and escape over the country to New York. A part of his army had crossed, when a storm scattered his boats and put an end to this daring scheme.<sup>76</sup>

[The attempt] to escape the trap by ferrying his men across the York and retreating to Philadelphia was frustrated by a storm which scattered and swamped the boats. [He gave] himself up entirely to vexation and despair.<sup>77</sup>

After having sent out a white flag and received terms of surrender, "with colors cased marched out between the lines of the American and French forces which formed an avenue more than a mile in length," the British "captive army moved with slow and solemn steps, their drums beating the quaint but highly appropriate tune of 'World's Upside Down.'"<sup>78</sup>

Thereafter the British House of Commons resolved to

72. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

74. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

75. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

76. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States* (Steele) Vol. I, p. 320-21.

77. *Chicago Tribune* editorial, Feb. 22, 1949.

78. Montgomery, *Student's American History*, p. 207.

"consider as enemies to His Majesty and the country"<sup>79</sup> whoever should advise continuation of the hostilities. The war was really ended by the fall of Yorktown.

If the foregoing facts of history had not existed, it is inconceivable how the colonists could have succeeded in the Revolutionary War. At times of decisive crises, of most perilous balance of issues, seemingly fortuitous facts and circumstances turned the scales in favor of victory.

However, this is not intended to detract in the least from the reputations of our great leaders of the Revolutionary era. Their greatness is even more securely proven by the fact that so many of them realized their helplessness and relied upon Divine assistance.

Samuel Adams, a great statesman of the period, said in 1776:

Let America exert her strength. Let her depend on God's blessing, and he who cannot be indifferent to her righteous cause will even work miracles, if necessary, to carry through this glorious conflict, and establish her feet upon a rock.<sup>80</sup>

As to General George Washington, his truly transcendent greatness stands out plainly in the light of the fact that he realized the controlling significance of the remarkable concourse of events at the very time of their occurrence. Washington wrote a letter to a friend in Virginia in August, 1778, as follows:

The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations.<sup>81</sup>

In his First Inaugural Address he said:

No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

80. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. V., p. 468.

81. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 153.

Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of Providential agency.<sup>82</sup>

These quotations are from two of the greatest statesmen of the Revolutionary period. Samuel Adams was said by Thomas Jefferson to have been "exceeded by no man in Congress for depth of purpose, zeal and sagacity."<sup>83</sup>

Adams' quoted statement was made before the events of the Revolution to which references have been made. Washington's statements were made during and after the events. The thoughtful and reverent intuition of these men was typical of the insight of an apparently preponderant number of outstanding leaders of the period.

Every thoughtful reader must agree that their faith was justified by the facts. The great body of the American people of all intervening generations have shared in that faith. As a consequence, the conduct of our national affairs has apparently been such as to have deserved continued Providential care.

#### THE FRAMING OF THE CONSTITUTION

Chronologically, the framing of the Constitution of the United States should be next considered. However, it requires such special treatment that nearly a whole separate chapter deals with it.

This document was said by William Ewart Gladstone, the greatest British statesman of the last generation, to be "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."<sup>84</sup>

The monumental work was actually "struck off" in less than one hundred working days by a convention composed of only fifty-five members of whom fifty-one participated in the debates; and, as Edmund Randolph said in connec-

82. *Harvard Classics*, Vol. 43, p. 242.

83. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 467.

84. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 566.

tion with the drafting of the Articles of Confederation, it was in the time of "the infancy of the science of constitutions.<sup>85</sup>

Under the circumstances the framers of the Constitution could hardly hope for success and at times they despaired of achieving it. George Washington said to them during a tense moment, "The event is in the hand of God."<sup>86</sup>

This devout spirit is also reflected in the words of Benjamin Franklin to the makers of the Constitution during the Convention:

We have searched for three weeks in political darkness, and found nothing. . . . Let us invoke the divine guidance of the Father of Light upon our proceedings. . . . The longer I live, and the more I know, the more I believe that God governs in the affairs of men, and, if the sparrow cannot fall without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his assistance? "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." I firmly believe this, and I also believe that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in our political building no better than the builders of Babel.<sup>87</sup>

Further reference to the framing of the Constitution will be made in Chapter II.

### THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

The next period of greatest crisis in the history of the United States was during the war between the states. The events of that period center around the personality of Abraham Lincoln.

All with one accord attribute to him a great part in the preservation of the Union. He seems almost as indispensable as Washington. Yet if his shiftless, roving father had moved southward instead of northward when he

85. *Ibid.*, p. 567.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*, p. 181.

migrated to Indiana, or if he had simply remained in Kentucky, in all human probability Lincoln would have been lost to the cause of the Union.<sup>88</sup>

As has been forcibly set forth by a recent writer, Lincoln's course of life which led him to the presidency was guided by a series of apparently fortuitous events. At fifty years of age he was practicing law in a shabby law office in Illinois, in very moderate circumstances.

His son Robert had taken entrance examinations at Harvard university but had failed in fifteen out of sixteen subjects and had enrolled at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. His father was concerned about him.

Just at that time Lincoln was invited to give a lecture in Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. Because he was interested in an opportunity to visit his son as well as in receiving the \$200 lecture fee, he accepted the invitation. When it was learned that he would use a political subject the place of meeting was changed and he got the notable recognition of his famous Cooper Union Address. As a result he was invited to give eleven additional addresses in New England states. Robert Lincoln claimed that his failure caused his father to become President.

When the Republican national convention convened in Chicago to nominate a candidate for President, Lincoln had the support of only a minority of the delegates, about one-sixth. This continued until the time arrived for the balloting.

A supporter of Lincoln had found an old rail fence for which Lincoln had in his youth split the locust and black walnut logs. At the Republican state convention he exhibited these rails and raised the slogan, "Abe Lincoln, the Rail Splitter." This became a popular campaign cry.

Because of delay in delivery of the tally sheets by a printer the balloting at the national convention was de-

88. Lord, *Beacon Lights of History*, Vol. XII, p. 241; Chamberlain, *The Ifs of History*, p. 153.

layed overnight. During the interval Lincoln's friends worked feverishly, even exceeding his authority in making some commitments in his behalf. As a result he was nominated on the fourth ballot.

Five events — only remotely related in time and place — made Abraham Lincoln President. Not all his qualities of character, his persuasive eloquence, or his political sagacity could have placed Lincoln at the head of the nation in its greatest hour of peril had not chance circumstances conspired to make it happen.

What were these circumstances? An invitation to deliver a lecture for a fee of \$200. The failure of a young man to pass his entrance examinations at Harvard. A sudden sense of showmanship by a politician in Decatur, Ill. The failure of a printer to keep his promise. And, finally, a midnight conspiracy in a hotel room. . . .

Thus, a strange series of unrelated events conspired to place him in the White House. But was it an accident? Was it merely political intrigue? . . . Or was it fate? Is it not just possible that that momentous day the hand of Destiny rested upon the shoulder of Abraham Lincoln?<sup>89</sup>

That this great man of destiny shared with those of the colonial era the devout spirit of trust in and dependence upon the God of history is shown by the narrative of his departure from his home for the nation's capital to take over the office of the Presidency after his election.

Lincoln left his home in Springfield, Illinois, for Washington, February 11, 1861. His parting words to the people among whom he had lived so long and who knew him best, were full of solemnity: "My friends, I cannot sufficiently express to you the sadness I feel at this moment. To you I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century: here my children were born; here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you

89. G. Lynn Sumner, "Meet Abraham Lincoln," as condensed in *Reader's Digest*, February, 1948, pp. 17-20.

again. A duty devolves upon me perhaps greater than that which has devolved upon any man since the days of Washington.

He never could have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I hope that you, my friends, will pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain.”<sup>90</sup>

One of the principal results of the Civil War, which took place during Lincoln’s administration, was the abolition of slavery. The cause which brought this about at the time it took place is disclosed in the following incident which has been rescued from interment in the footnote of a historian.

General Lee, “flushed with success,” crossed the Potomac and invaded Maryland. The campaign was very strenuous, culminating in the battle of Antietam which was interpreted as a Union victory. Lincoln had prepared a draft of his proclamation some time before and the reason he happened to issue it at the time he did is explained in his own words as follows:

90. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States* (Steele), Vol. II, pp. 483-84.

“As to Abraham Lincoln’s church relationship, he was raised with a Baptist background. He was baptized by a Christian [Disciples] minister whom he asked to place his name on his church book. He attended the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Illinois, during his residence there and he attended Sunday services and the midweek prayer meetings of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C., while President” (James DeForest Murch, in *United Evangelical Action* magazine, Feb. 1, 1953, p. 10).

“Lincoln’s faith was not simple. It was a faith arrived at through long days and nights of wrestling with the intractable facts which posed the all but insoluble problems of his administration. If the Chief Justice [Warren] will read again the Second Inaugural he will find in it as sophisticated — and incidentally as Calvinistic — a faith as any political leader ever hammered out on the iron anvil of experience (Paul Hutchinson, editor of *Christian Century* magazine, in an article in *Life* magazine, Mar. 22, 1954, p. 170; same article in *Christian Century* magazine, Mar. 24, 1954, p. 369).

I put the draft of the proclamation aside, waiting for a victory. Well, the next news we had was of Pope's disaster at Bull Run. Things looked darker than ever. Finally came the week of the battle of Antietam. I determined to wait no longer. The news came, I think, on Wednesday, that the advantage was on our side. I was then staying at the Soldiers' Home. Here I finished writing the second draft of the proclamation; came up on Saturday; called the Cabinet together to hear it, and it was published the following Monday. I made a solemn vow before God, that if General Lee was driven back from Maryland I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom of the slaves.<sup>91</sup>

Other incidents which were seemingly mere accidents have had great influence on the course of events in the history of the United States. Some of these have resulted from international involvements, movements on the "checkerboard of the world."

At the time of our Revolution England was at war with Spain and Holland. France gave substantial aid to the colonists, hoping to weaken England and eventually get back part of her lost empire in North America. After the Revolution, Spain, and later France, had the territory west of the Mississippi river, until the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Strangely enough it was the uprising of the people of San Domingo under that great leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, "with the yellow fever sweeping the French army [sent] to conquer him," coupled with a rumor that Great Britain was fitting out a fleet to seize the island of New Orleans, that led Napoleon to sell Louisiana to the United States. He was about to engage in a great contest with Great Britain.<sup>92</sup>

91. Steele, *A Brief History of the United States*, pp. 242-43, note; Carpenter, *Six Months at the White House with Abraham Lincoln*, p. 90.

92. Excerpts from J. K. Hosmer, *History of the Louisiana Purchase*:

"Presently stood at their side [the side of the pupils of Toussaint]

a terrible ally, the yellow fever! The pestilence devoured far more than the sword devoured, until, as the summer ended, LeClerc was forced to report that scarcely a seventh of his army remained. In November the general followed his legions into the sepulcher, and the cause of the French [in San Domingo] became hopeless" (p. 51). "In San Domingo general and army had perished under the weapons of the blacks and the stroke of pestilence. Victor's army, prepared for Louisiana, it had been necessary to send to that aboding-place of death [San Domingo] to recruit in some degree the ranks out of which the troops had dropped" (p. 69).

"But for the delays imposed upon the First Consul [Napoleon], first by Godoy [for Spain], who would not yield Louisiana until every condition had been fulfilled, and secondly by Toussaint and his followers, who balked the French in San Domingo, General Victor [Napoleon's general] might at this time have been setting in order a threatening foreign host at New Orleans, [when Robert R. Livingston (American minister to France) was just arriving in Paris]" (p. 58).

"[Napoleon] denounced the claims of England to be 'mistress of the seas,' and had said 'to free the world from the commercial tyranny of England it is necessary to oppose her a maritime power which will one day become her rival. It must be the United States. The English aspire to dispose of all the riches of the world. I shall be useful to the entire universe if I can prevent them from dominating America as they dominate Asia'" (pp. 131-32).

"[Napoleon told his Minister of Marine] 'I know the worth of Louisiana and have wished to repair the error of the French negotiator who abandoned it in 1762. I have recovered it [from Spain] on paper through some lines in a treaty; but I have hardly done so when I am about to lose it again. But if it escapes me, it shall one day be a dearer cost to those who force me to give it up than the cost to those to whom I will surrender it. The English have successively taken from France, Canada, the Isle of Royal, Newfoundland, Acadia, and the richest territories of Asia. They are intriguing and disturbing in San Domingo. They shall not have the Mississippi, which they covet. Louisiana is nothing in comparison with their aggrandizement in all parts of the globe; but the jealousy they feel because of its return under the dominion of France warns me that they intend to seize it, and it is thus they will begin the war. They already have twenty vessels in the Gulf of Mexico. They swagger over those seas as sovereigns: and in San Domingo, since the death of LeClerc, our affairs are going from bad to worse. The conquest of Louisiana will be easy if they will only take the trouble to descend upon it. I have not a moment to lose in putting it out of their power. I do not know but that they are there already. . . . I wish to take away from them even the idea that they will ever be able to own this colony. I contemplate turning it over to the United States. . . . They are asking me for but a single city of Louisiana, but I already regard the whole colony as lost'" (pp. 131-34).

Our representatives were surprised that the proposition for this cession should come to them from Napoleon and they closed the transaction without previous authority from our government. They had been given authority only to purchase the island at the mouth of the Mississippi river. None of our statesmen planned the acquisition of the vast territory which now comprises more than fourteen of our great states.<sup>93</sup>

Another unplanned and unforeseen incident of great interest is the discovery of gold in California. The Spaniards for 300 years pursued a frenzied hunt for gold in the New World. The greatest deposit in the world was under their very noses. Yet both Spain and Mexico allowed California to pass out of their hands without any knowledge of its riches.

How surprising to read that in the very year that Mexico ceded California to the United States, 1848, "James Marshall stumbled on the quartz formation of the Sierra Nevadas, where the erosion of the centuries had exposed the gold." "The discovery happened just nine days before the signing of that treaty with Mexico, and the transfer of California to the United States was made without any knowledge of it."<sup>94</sup>

Thus, by the simple fact of the time of the discovery, were those riches entrusted to the stewardship of the American people. And not only that, but the timing of that discovery was such that the onrush of the "49'ers" from the North to California added additional free territory and contributed to the decision of the slavery issue. Also, the impetus that discovery gave to immigration and to the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad and other railroads powerfully influenced the development of the Middle West.

93. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XXVII, p. 369.

94. Thompson, *A History of the People of the United States*, p. 285.

It would be presumptuous to attempt to trace every instance of superhuman agency in our history. Not every unusual occurrence can be attributed to Providence. Some of the deductions here made are perhaps fallacious.

But the grand sweep of the narrative, the cooperation of so many beyond-human factors toward the same result, the conscious helplessness of the principal actors who testify to their realization that the controlling force had been superhuman, compel an abiding conviction that our destiny has been Divinely directed.

Some of the events assembled may have been accidental, but such a pattern could not conceivably have been made by merely accidental events. Fortuities would not have had such uniformly one-sided benefit or advantage. They would not show such intelligence, design, and purpose.

The series of tests for the selection of facts from history as set forth above leaves out of account the fact that even man's own decisions, the operations of his mind, are sometimes produced or controlled by God. Such interpositions are harder to recognize. Even the person himself who makes the decision may not know of the fact of God's leading.

When men by themselves have made decisions, God often impels them farther than they originally intended. Recently this was forcibly pointed out by an editorial writer under the caption, "The Push of God's Hand in American History."<sup>95</sup> The writer commented that "God has, through all our history, pushed us farther than we intended to go."

When we began the Revolutionary War "Congress declared, without a dissenting vote, that it was not the intention to separate from the mother country."

Jefferson afterward wrote that the "possibility of separation from England was contemplated with af-

95. In: *The United Presbyterian*.

fiction by all." Washington said, "When I first took command of the army, I abhorred the idea of American independence"; and John Adams even, the very palladium of American independence, declared that "there was not a moment during the Revolution when I would not have given everything I possessed for a restoration to the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have a sufficient guaranty for its continuance."<sup>96</sup>

At the opening of the Civil War "Congress declared, with but two dissenting votes, that it was not the purpose of the north to destroy slavery."

When the Maine went down in Havana harbor we were precipitated into a war that not only freed Cuba from Spain but ended our period of isolation as a nation and made us a world power.

We endeavored to stay out of World War I but in spite of ourselves we were forced into it, turning the balance in favor of democracy as against absolutism.

There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.

— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, V. 2, 10.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," Ps. 33:12.

As he considers these facts the thoughtful person must feel the wells of thanksgiving springing up within him.<sup>97</sup>

96. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States*, (Steele), Vol. I, p. 161.

97. In so far as America has been favored by God, it has been only because she has conformed measurably to His will. His favor will continue only as America obeys His law and fulfills His purpose.

## II

### *MOTIVATING TENETS OF THE AMERICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC LIFE*

The people of the United States live under a republican form of government. What was the origin or cause of this development?

There is no historical continuity between this form of government and the so-called democracy of ancient Greece, for example. In the perspective of history it is evident that such examples were imperfect as types of democracy and were temporary, no doubt in part because of insufficiency of fundamental tenets on which they were founded.

It is true that our founding fathers, at least the leaders among the colonists, benefitted by knowledge of the experiences of Greece and Rome. What is meant here is not that nothing from such sources was of value in the undertaking but that the principal motivation for, and the framework of, the democracy here set up were derived independently of such precedents.

Over-simplification and concentration of emphases are techniques often used in establishing a thesis. It will be understood that many things contributed to the evolution of our social and civic organization but this discussion is directed principally to "central themes."

In the England of the time of the colonization of America representative government was greatly limited. Queen Elizabeth had attempted to check the spread of Puritanism because she realized its essential inconsistency with the system of personal government, although "with the republican and antimonarchical theories indeed that Cal-

vinism had begotten elsewhere, English Calvinism showed as yet no sort of sympathy.”<sup>1</sup>

The old conception of personal rule, the dependence of a nation on the arbitrary will of its ruler, was jarring everywhere more and more with the religious as well as the philosophical impulses of the time.<sup>2</sup>

King James I succeeded Elizabeth and was ruling when the Pilgrims came to America. He believed in the “divine right” of the king.

James in fact was claiming a more personal and exclusive direction of affairs than any English sovereign that had gone before him.<sup>3</sup> He still claimed the absolute direction of all affairs.<sup>4</sup>

With his own hands he tore out the pages of the journal of the House of Commons on which was written its resolution declaring its right to discuss affairs of state and in its place he wrote:

I will govern according to the common weal, but not according to the common will.<sup>5</sup>

The power of representatives of the people was not yet established in the land from which the colonists came. There was no pattern of popular government which they could transplant from there.

At that time there was no place in the world “except perhaps in a few districts of Switzerland”<sup>6</sup> where there was “pure government by the people.”<sup>7</sup> Whence then came not only the conception but also the tenacity which established democracy in America?

The idea of government by the governed in the American colonies, especially among the people generally, really

1. Green, *History of the English People*, Vol. III, p. 17.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

6. Montgomery, *American History*, p. 81.

7. *Ibid.*

developed from the form of church government established by John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland (1536-1564). The general constituency of church members in Geneva governed their congregations through their elected representatives. As will be more fully shown in the next chapter, Calvin made it a tenet derived from the Scriptures that this right was ordained of God.

In the churches of America this form of polity was not simply influenced by the form existing in Geneva. It was in essence transplanted from Geneva in the Presbyterian form of church government. Irrespective of whether Calvin got some ideas used by him from other sources such as Venice, Swiss cantons, etc., the ideas of the colonists came from Calvin and were reinforced by the belief that he taught that the Bible prescribed the polity used.

Wherever Calvinism went the establishment of this form (popularly known as Presbyterian) was universally attempted. Self-government thereby became a habit and it was inevitably transferred by Calvinists wherever possible from their church government to the civil government. "The ecclesiastical republic in time led on to a political republic."<sup>8</sup>

This is not merely the conclusion of the author of this treatise. It has been enunciated by many standard historians, some of whom are hereinafter referred to. A brief survey of the facts will make evident the manner in which this system became established in the American colonies.

The Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock were Separatists (from the Church of England) in religious denomination.<sup>9</sup> To bring terminology up to date, they were Congregationalists.

Congregationalists of that era were Calvinists,<sup>10</sup> and Congregationalism included practice of a form of church

8. *Universal World History*, p. 1902.

9. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

10. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. III, p. 234.

government similar to that founded by Calvin. Many had been forced to flee from England to the Continent in the time of Queen Mary in the sixteenth century and there "learned to favor Presbyterianism."<sup>11</sup>

Other Separatists in England adopted a modified Presbyterian form of church government, agreeing that government of the local congregation should be by the people of its membership but "emphasizing the fellowship of the churches less," that is, making each congregation more independent of other congregations than in pure Presbyterianism.<sup>12</sup>

The Pilgrims of the Mayflower were Separatists and Calvinists. They had been persecuted in England on the issue of church government. It was attempted to force all Protestants to belong to the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Church of England, which was not governed by the general membership of the church but by bishops, by the clergy, by "divine appointment of episcopacy."<sup>13</sup>

These facts not only account for the natural preference of the Pilgrims for the democratic form of government but they are also the key to the explanation of the originally less perfect democracy in Virginia than in Massachusetts. The first colonists of Virginia, the Cavaliers, were members of the Church of England who did not separate from its episcopal form of government but protested some of its ritual and ceremonies.<sup>14</sup> Most of their leaders "were men of rank, and before the war [in England] had been men of property."<sup>15</sup>

The colony of Virginia was originally founded from economic motives, namely, the hope of pecuniary gain. The colonists came "in search of wealth or adventure, ex-

11. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

13. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 77; *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IV, p. 134.

14. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

15. *Ibid.*

pecting, when rich, to return to England.”<sup>16</sup> At first democracy seems there to have been a matter of policy, not a matter of conscience or religious motive.

The Cavaliers did not allow all inhabitants to vote. That right was restricted to men of property, or “gentlemen.” “The Virginians wished to keep the government of the colony in the hands of royalist landowners or responsible citizens; the Puritan commonwealth of Massachusetts wished to keep it in the control of Puritans,” that is, members of their church.<sup>17</sup>

In Massachusetts the political franchise was from 1621 to 1664 confined by law to members of Congregational churches. In New Haven Colony it was similarly restricted from 1639 to 1665. Between 1638 and 1665 all Congregational colonies of New England passed statutes basing ministerial support on universal taxation. . . . This connection with the State continued in Connecticut till 1818, and in Massachusetts till 1834. Since then, in America, Congregationalism has had purely voluntary support. . . . American Congregationalists have, however, cheerfully acquiesced in the separation of Church and State characteristic of the United States.<sup>18</sup>

The motivation even of civil government in Massachusetts was essentially religious, as was inevitable from the fact that religion dominated the whole project of the founding of the colony. This is proven not only by the fact that only church members had the right to vote but also by the language of the Mayflower Compact which was signed by the Pilgrims, gathered in the cabin of the *Mayflower* in which they sailed to America, before they landed. That Compact began with the words, “In the name of God, Amen,” and recited that the project had

16. Steele, *A Brief History of the United States* (Barnes's Historical Series), p. 46.

17. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

18. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV, p. 21.

been "undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith."<sup>19</sup>

*But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking  
that hath made us free,  
Hoard ing it in mouldy parchments, while  
our tender spirits flee  
The rude grasp of that great Impulse  
which drove them across the sea.*

— James Russell Lowell, *The Present Crisis*.

The fact of history is that democracy in America as established by the original Puritan colonists was not only derived directly from their form of church government, but was at first actually identical with it. The same body (town meeting) both chose the minister of the congregation and conducted the civil government. There is no evidence that they copied this method of civil government from any historical precedent whatsoever.

In this uniting of church government with civil government they were at that stage of their development variant from true Calvinism as set forth in Chapter III of this book, in that they did not separate church and state. However, they did not by this union endanger the integrity of the church because of the requirement that every voter must be a member of the church.

They had been practicing their democratic form of church government before they came to America. As colonists they had the opportunity to exercise the right of civil government and they simply added that function to their church government. By subsequent evolution the ecclesiastical government and the civil government were separated as now guaranteed by the Constitution of the

19. *Harvard Classics*, Vol. 43, p. 62; *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVIII, p. 466. "The system of civil government had been established by common agreement; the church had been fully organized before it left Leyden. As the Pilgrims landed, their institutions were already perfected. A commonwealth was in the bud. Democratic liberty and independent Christian worship started into being," Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 246.

United States, and both were continued in the republican form. Secular historians generally go no further back in tracing the origin of democracy in America than to the New England town meeting. They do not give the source of the town meeting. It was simply the existing governmental body of the church of the Puritan colonists which they had derived from the church polity of Calvin's Geneva.

The Pilgrim Fathers who settled at Plymouth [1620] and the Puritans who settled at Salem and Boston [1628-1630] began at once to develop a system of local government. . . . The organization of the town was accomplished through the agency of a town meeting. The early settlers of New England were equals in social rank; their average of intelligence was high; they were nearly equal in worldly possessions. Respecting matters of government, they were intensely democratic and at the same time intensely theocratic. They believed that the state should be a "city of God" and that authority in spiritual and temporal matters should flow from a common source. Accordingly their town meetings were religious assemblages acting as pure democracies, except in Rhode Island, where the civil authority did not interfere in matters of conscience. The meetings in colonies where the theocratic principle prevailed were usually held in a church, and all the male church members of the town who were of legal age could attend and take part in the discussions and vote upon any question that might arise. . . . Representatives to the colonial legislature were also elected in town meeting. Besides electing town officers, the town meeting acted as a legislature for all matters of local concern. It levied the town taxes; it passed by-laws relating to the use of common fields and pastures; it made assignments of lands to individuals; it provided for the management and support of the schools. In all New England colonies but Rhode Island it regulated and controlled all affairs connected with the church, subject to the superior authority of the colonial legislature. No detail of the civil or religious life of the community was too small for the attention of the

town meeting. . . . There is no evidence, however, that the New England settlers consciously imitated any existing or pre-existing type of local government when they developed their town system. They brought to their task English political instincts and English traditions, and availed themselves of English experience, but the town as an institution, both in its organizations and in its functions, was an out-growth of the peculiar social, economic and political conditions which prevailed in New England during the first years of the colonial period. . . . In its essential characteristics town government in New England has not changed greatly since the days of the early settlers, except in its religious feature; that feature entirely disappeared in the early part of the 19th century, when the separation of Church and State was achieved.<sup>20</sup>

The original government [of the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay] was indeed theocratic, based upon the Congregational form of church government, which was established by law in 1681.<sup>21</sup>

Had the American colonists purely and simply imitated in their new country the system which they had seen at work in England, they would certainly not have founded the democratic government of the town meeting. In order to explain their political activity, we must take into account, and that largely, their religious ideas. And we shall naturally be led to do this if we remember that in the beginning, each settlement or town was, before all things, a congregation, and that the town-meeting was in most cases the same thing as the assembly of the congregation.<sup>22</sup>

That this idea of government by the governed was a settled conviction of the Puritan colonists is shown also by the fact (in addition to facts referred to above) that in Hartford "every freeman who neglected to attend

20. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 724-25.

21. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 401.

22. Borgeaud, *The Rise of Modern Democracy in Old and New England*, pp. 139-40.

town-meeting was fined sixpence, unless he had a good excuse."<sup>23</sup>

However, the discussion of the state of democracy in Virginia in the colonial period must not be left off at the point indicated above. The Cavaliers were Calvinists as to all theological questions except as to rituals and government, just as the Church of England itself was.<sup>24</sup> That faith included the right of private judgment in spiritual matters, with consequent individual responsibility, and it emphasized the Divine sanction of the principle of the equality of all men.

No one can reasonably question that the Reformed theology affirms in clearest language the reality of human freedom (as a natural endowment), and of man's responsibility for his voluntary actions. . . . The Church polity which springs from the scheme of Calvin, as now expounded, is necessarily one which lays stress on the equality of all believers before God.<sup>25</sup>

23. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 96. "The popular movement of the American revolution . . . may be traced back to the first Puritan settlers of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. 'From the first Institution of the Company of Massachusetts Bay,' says Dr. Robertson, 'its members seem to have been animated with a spirit of innovation in civil policy as well as religion; and by the habit of rejecting established usages in the one, they were prepared for deviating from them in the other. They had applied for a royal charter, in order to give legal effect to their operations in England, as acts of body politic; but the persons whom they sent out to America as soon as they landed there, considered themselves as individuals, united together by voluntary association, possessing the natural right of men who form a society to adopt what mode of government and enact what laws they deemed most conducive to general felicity.' And such had continued to be the prevailing spirit of the people of New England from the period of their settlement to that of the revolution. The people of Virginia too, notwithstanding their primitive loyalty, had been trained to revolutionary doctrines and to warlike habits," John Quincy Adams, *An Eulogy on the Life and Character of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, September 27, 1836, published by John H. Eastburn, City Printer, No. 18 State Street, Boston, 1836, pp. 6-9.

24. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IV, p. 134.

25. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, pp. 149, 152.

Succeeding generations of the Virginia colonists were led to become ultimately fully democratic in their ideas of civil government, especially after permeation by Presbyterianism and by the spirit of independence which led to the Revolution.

The Puritan spirit of the North had more or less affected the whole Union, and the revolution had left behind two leading characteristics — a strong passion for equality, and an unreasoning jealousy of power.<sup>26</sup>

The large majority of those who inaugurated independence in Virginia, and enacted the Declaration of Rights, were vestrymen. But the unction with which they overthrew the established Church was so distinctly Presbyterian that even at the present day doubts recur concerning the religious affiliation of some of the eminent actors in those events. Not only was Patrick Henry, whose oratorical glow has been attributed to the inspiring eloquence of Samuel Davies, the apostle of Presbyterianism, "supposed to be a dissenter," but Madison also.<sup>27</sup>

The historians of the Episcopal Church have generally taken the view that the vestry's [laymen's] control over the Virginia clergy was detrimental to the well-being of the colonial Church. . . . The success with which Virginia vestries maintained their control over the parishes throughout the entire colonial period was a factor of large political as well as ecclesiastical significance. For one thing it helps to account for the unanimity with which leading churchmen of Virginia supported the War for Independence.<sup>28</sup>

The plain fact in the matter was that the Maryland and Virginia clergy were opposed to a colonial episcopate and on the same grounds as the Presbyterians.

26. Christopher James Riethmuller, *Alexander Hamilton and His Contemporaries*, p. 186.

27. Moncure Daniel Conway, *Edmund Randolph*, p. 30. "The Anglican church was established in Virginia at a time when its ministry in England was prevailingly Calvinist in theology," John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, p. 334.

28. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, pp. 32-33.

terians and Congregationalists. In other words, they looked upon a colonial bishop as "just another agency of British tyranny."<sup>29</sup>

One of Virginia's outstanding leaders, James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution" of the United States, studied for the Christian ministry at Princeton College under Presbyterian auspices.<sup>30</sup> In fact, Virginia at the later period became the rival of Massachusetts in the pureness of its democracy.

[It should be noted that] though largely monarchial in feeling and Episcopal in worship, Virginia had already given a leader [George Washington] to the Democratic and Presbyterian army that beleaguered Boston.<sup>31</sup>

The development of democracy continued in the separate colonies until the time of the Revolutionary War. Thereafter the government of all of the colonies was integrated under the United States Constitution. The basic principles of that document are the same as had been employed in the government of the separate colonies. In fact, the dominant majority of the people were still motivated by the same tenets as the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock. It has been estimated that two-thirds of the population of the country at the time of the Revolution were descendants of Calvinists.<sup>32</sup> Actually, the preponderance of descendants of Calvinists in the population continued for at least more than fifty years after the Revolution.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

30. "He [Madison] graduated in 1771, but remained for another year at Princeton studying, apparently for the ministry, under the direction of John Witherspoon (1722-1794)," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XVII (11th ed.), p. 284. "In Orange County where the Madisons lived, persecution of dissenters was rife. From Princeton Madison brought a terrible touchstone for the establishment in Virginia, as well as evangelical devoutness," Conway, *Edmund Randolph*, pp. 160-61.

31. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States* (Steele), Vol. I, p. 159.

32. Alma Dykman, in *Christian Union Herald*, Oct. 16, 1943.

The early Puritans . . . were parents of one third of the whole white population of the United States as it was in 1834.<sup>33</sup>

To these descendants of the early Puritans must be added descendants of other Calvinists, including Presbyterians, Associate Presbyterians and Associate Reformed Presbyterians (most of whom by union in 1858 formed the present United Presbyterian denomination), Reformed Presbyterians, Reformed Protestant Dutch, Huguenots, German Reformed, Baptists, and others.

By the end of the colonial period the Presbyterians and Congregationalists combined had gained the ecclesiastical control of the colonies. Together the two bodies had nearly half of the total number of congregations in America. Both had supported the cause of independence with almost complete unanimity, and both came through the war with increased prestige . . . Both were Calvinistic and doctrinally minded.<sup>34</sup>

The polity which had been in general practice in New England since the beginning . . . was a "Congregationalized-Presbyterianism or a Presbyterianized-Congregationalism."<sup>35</sup>

Consociations functioned more and more like Presbyteries.<sup>36</sup>

The history of religion in America holds a peculiarly close relationship to the general history of the American spirit due to the fact that more than elsewhere the American churches have been managed by laymen. . . . It is a significant fact that of the four largest religious bodies in the English colonies, three were entirely self-governing.<sup>37</sup>

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that there was set up for the United States a Presbyterian

33. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 375.

34. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture 1765-1840*, p. 209.

35. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, p. 105.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

37. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture 1765-1840*, pp. viii-ix.

form of government. In fact, Alexander Hamilton, one of the greatest statesmen of our colonial era, while the Constitutional convention was at work "kept the Presbyterian Form of Government on his study table during the session of the convention,"<sup>38</sup> as noted in previous chapter. A century later a great historian stated unqualifiedly that Hamilton "gave shape to existing political institutions."<sup>39</sup> A Justice of the Supreme Court of one of our states has said in a written opinion in an adjudicated case:

A notable resemblance has been remarked in the governmental system of the Presbyterian Church and of this great Republic of ours.<sup>40</sup>

The writer's wife (who had five ancestors in the Revolutionary War and who is a distant cousin of Martha Washington, wife of George Washington) has a copy of the "Form of Presbyterial Church-Government" which was published in Philadelphia in 1829. It purports to have been "printed from the last Edinburgh edition." This came down to her through her family. It is assumed that it is like the copy which Alexander Hamilton used in the Constitutional Convention.

This Form of Government provides for presbyteries (also called classes), which are district organizations corresponding to the congressional districts of our federal government, for synods corresponding to the states and for a general assembly corresponding to the congress. It defines, grants, and limits the powers of the respective courts or councils and by it they are bound as the congress and the state legislatures are bound by the Constitution of the United States. It had the function of a written constitution. The government set up under it was

38. *Ramsey v. Hicks*, 30 L.R.A. (N.S.), pp. 665, 674; 91 N.E., p. 344.

39. John Lord, *Beacon Lights of History*, Vol. XI, p. 173.

40. *Ramsey v. Hicks*, p. 674.

a multi-sovereign federation analogous to the government set up in the Constitution for the United States.

Chapter XXXI of the "Confession of Faith" printed with the Form of Government further specifically prescribes the powers of church courts or councils. Membership in them is required to be by "delegation from their churches."<sup>41</sup>

41. For the information of the reader who may not be familiar with Presbyterian church government perhaps a little more detail will be helpful. The word "presbyter" has been transplanted from the Greek language and simply means "elder." As used in the Presbyterian churches it means a person elected by the membership of a congregation to be one of the rulers of the congregation, as representative of the general individual membership.

The Presbyterian form of church government is a representative federal government. The local unit is the Congregation. The district unit is the Presbytery. The next larger unit (usually in the United States conforming in size to the states of the Union) is the Synod. The supreme official body (body of delegated powers) is the General Assembly.

The general plan of Presbyterian church government continues today substantially as it was in Hamilton's day. The board in the local Congregation made up of elders elected by the membership is called the Session. This board governs the Congregation.

The members of the meetings of the Presbytery (meeting about every three months in district meetings) are elders from the Congregations elected by the Sessions for each particular meeting to represent the Congregations. The members of the meetings of the Synod are elders elected by the Sessions of the Congregations for each particular meeting (about once a year) to represent the Congregations. All ministers of Congregations are automatically members of the meetings of Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods under present rules. The members of the General Assembly meeting once each year are elders from the Congregations and ministers of the Congregations, elected by the Presbyteries as representatives (a delegate body composed of an equal number of elders and ministers).

The jurisdictions and powers of these respective bodies (courts or judicatories) are defined in the Book of Government and the Confession of Faith which are the constitution of the church (under the supreme authority of the Scriptures to which it is believed they conform). There are provisions for appeal from the lowest court (the Session) to the Presbytery, to the Synod and even to the General Assembly on prescribed conditions. The national president of the church is called the Moderator. The congregational Session is actually the

principal governing body so far as the rights and interests of individual members are concerned. It has wide jurisdiction of matters of faith and practice in carrying out the provisions of the Book of Government. By comparison, the General Assembly is greatly limited in its jurisdiction. It has administrative or regulatory powers over mission boards and church agencies, but it cannot change the law or doctrine of the church without submission of the proposed measures to vote of the Presbyteries.

As already said, this is a system of representative federal government, involving multiple sovereignty similar to the civil government of the United States. All governing authority is derived either directly or through representatives from the general individual membership of the local churches, that is, congregations.

"Until General Washington was installed as the first President of the United States, no such plan of [civil] government [two governments in operation side by side, state and national], had ever been attempted. . . . The glory of having been the first to suggest the design of the double government has been claimed for Hamilton. . . . certain it is that Hamilton's correspondence contains the first distinct proposition of the broad general principle" (Moncure Daniel Conway, *Edmund Randolph*, pp. 186, 188).

"The history which has been detailed in previous chapters of this work, of the progress of federal ideas, and of the efforts to introduce and establish principles tending to consolidate the Union, has been largely occupied with the recital of his [Hamilton's] opinions, exertions, and prevalent influence. Beginning with the year 1780, when he was only three-and-twenty years of age, and when he sketched the outline of a national government strongly resembling the one which the Constitution long afterwards established. . . . The whole period is marked by his wisdom and filled with his power. He did more than any other public man of the time to lessen the force of state attachments, to create a national feeling, and to lead the public mind to a comprehension of the necessity for an efficient national government. Indeed, he was the first to perceive and to develop the idea of a real union of the people of the United States. To him, more than to anyone else, is to be attributed the conviction that the people of the different States were competent to establish a general government by their own direct action" (George Ticknor Curtis, *History of the Constitution of the United States*, Vol. I, [1854], pp. 412-13).

"At the age of three-and-twenty . . . he [Hamilton] had clearly wrought out for himself a political system, far in advance of the conceptions of his contemporaries, and one which, in the hands of those who opposed him in life, became, when he was laid in a premature grave, the basis on which this government was consolidated; on which, to the present day, it has been administered; and on which alone it can safely rest in that future, which seems so to stretch out its unending glories before us" (*ibid.*, pp. 415-16).

This Confession of Faith even has provisions which are suggestive of the Bill of Rights which was added to the Constitution by the first Amendments, in the following provisions:

God alone is Lord of the conscience and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.

Here it is asserted that the sphere of government is limited, that in matters of conscience it has no authority. The Amendments of the United States Constitution define areas which they place beyond the powers of civil government.

Hamilton, called "the brilliant genius"<sup>42</sup> of the Constitutional Convention, was of Scotch descent on one side and Huguenot (French Presbyterian) on the other.<sup>43</sup> As a boy in the West Indies he had received little schooling but had had "good training at the hands of Rev. Hugh Knox, a Presbyterian minister,"<sup>44</sup> and late in life he made his profession of faith to the Rev. J. M. Mason, D. D., pastor of an Associate Reformed Church in New York City.<sup>45</sup> (The Associate Reformed Church was an antecedent of the present United Presbyterian denomination.)

Ambrose Spencer, distinguished contemporary and "political enemy"<sup>46</sup> of Hamilton who afterwards was Chief Justice of the New York Supreme Court, said:

Alexander Hamilton was the greatest man this country ever produced. . . . It was he more than any other man, who thought out the Constitution of the

42. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 567.

43. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 654.

44. Chamberlain, *The Ifs of History*, p. 109.

45. *Memorial Service for Major-General Alexander Hamilton*, *New York State Society of the Cincinnati*, July 31st, 1804, (published by Hopkins and Seymour), pp. 38-40.

46. Lewis, *Great American Lawyers*, p. 371.

United States and the details of the government of the Union.<sup>47</sup>

"Hamilton did actually create the political entity,"<sup>48</sup> the government of the United States. Guizot, the great French historian and learned statesman, asserted: "There is not in the Constitution of the United States an element of order, or force, or duration which he did not powerfully contribute to introduce into it and to cause to predominate."<sup>49</sup> Of this tribute John Lord, the American historian, wrote:

"What exalted praise! To be the maker of a constitution requires the highest maturity of reason."<sup>50</sup>

The Constitution was chiefly the work<sup>51</sup> of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, who was called "the most sagacious statesman in the convention"<sup>52</sup> and the "Father of the Constitution."<sup>53</sup> As to Madison's Presbyterian background,<sup>54</sup> as above stated, he was a student of theology at Princeton College under John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister who was born in Scotland and a descendant of John Knox, the great Reformer, and who was the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence.<sup>55</sup>

47. Lodge, *Alexander Hamilton*, pp. 273-74. With this appraisal agree other competent students of our constitutional history, including, for example, Myron T. Herrick, former Governor of Ohio and Ambassador to France, who said: "Washington, of course, stands as the Father of his country. But his great accomplishments were possible largely through the constructive ability of Alexander Hamilton. The conception of representative government presented by Hamilton was the frame-work of the Republic, . . . possibly the first man who occurs to me responsible more than anyone else for the greatness of our Nation, is the man with the great creative genius — Alexander Hamilton" (Arthur Hendrik Vandenberg, *The Greatest American, Alexander Hamilton*, pp. 70-71). "It was the judgment of Chancellor James Kent [great legal commentator and contemporary of Hamilton] . . . that 'all the documentary proof and the current observation of the time lead us to the conclusion that he [Hamilton] surpassed all his contemporaries in his exertions to create, recommend, adopt and defend the Constitution of the United States'" *Encyclo-*

*paedia Britannica*, Vol. XII (11th ed.), p. 881. "As a statesman, he [Madison] is to be ranked, by a long interval, after Hamilton" (George Ticknor Curtis, *op. cit.*, p. 428).

48. Lodge, *op. cit.*, p. vii. "[Hamilton] the remarkable man, who did the most to call it [the Constitution] into existence and to bring it into working order. . . . Into particulars of those discussions [in the Constitutional Convention] it is not intended to enter here, but the part which Hamilton took in them was of an importance impossible to rate too highly. He stood in the midst of the jarring elements, like a beneficent genius; and the proportion in which his views were adopted or rejected may be almost regarded as the measure of the strength and weakness of the Constitution" (Christopher James Rietmüller, *Alexander Hamilton and his Contemporaries*, pp. iv, 192, [Bell and Baldy, London, 1864]). "Dr. William Samuel Johnson, a delegate from Connecticut, very truly observed, that if 'the Constitution did not succeed on trial, Mr. Hamilton was less responsible for that result than any other member, for he fully and frankly pointed out to the Convention what he apprehended were the infirmities to which it was liable. And that if it answered the fond expectations of the public, the community would be more indebted to Mr. Hamilton than to any other member; for after its essential outlines were agreed to, he labored most indefatigably to heal those infirmities, and to guard against the evils to which they might expose it. . . . It may with justice be said, that the present Constitution of the United States, the most perfect piece of political machinery which the world has ever seen, . . . was the production of the masterly mind of Hamilton'" (Samuel M. Smucker, *The Life and Times of Alexander Hamilton*, pp. 199-200, [L. P. Crown & Co., Boston and Chicago, 1857]).

49. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XII (11th ed.), p. 882.

50. Lord, *Beacon Lights of History*, Vol. XI, p. 195.

51. "The 'great discovery' [the plan for constitutional government of the United States] . . . was taken there [to the Convention] carefully formulated in three prearranged 'plans,' two of which were presented during the first moments of the first day the Convention met for real business . . . , the Virginia plan, with Madison's three letters, the preparation of which began nearly a year before the Convention met . . . , the elaborate plan or 'system' worked out by Charles Pinckney at Charleston and described in his 'Observations,' months before his departure from that city . . . , Hamilton's plan worked out beforehand so elaborately as a constitution that it might have gone into effect the next day if it had been adopted. When we add to these three plans, identical in all vital particulars, and carefully elaborated months before the Convention met, the great paper of February 16, 1783 [by Pelatiah Webster, of Philadelphia, who was not a member of the Convention], . . . we have a body of documentary evidence setting forth 'the great discovery in modern political science' in four distinct and dogmatic forms . . . ,

"There were only three plans of a new system of federal government taken to the convention, — the three so elaborately worked out by Madison, Pinckney and Hamilton months before their departure for Philadelphia. If any member of the Convention was the author of the 'new discovery,' it was one of these three, — no kind of claims in that regard can possibly be set up in favor of any other member" (Hannis Taylor, *The Origin and Growth of the American Constitution*, p. 21.)

The reference in the foregoing quotation to the "great discovery" is in comment upon the statement by DeTocqueville, the French author, that the United States Constitution was based "upon a wholly novel theory which may be considered a great discovery in modern political science" (*ibid.*, p. 21).

The paper of February 16, 1783, referred to in the foregoing quotation was by Pelatiah Webster, of Philadelphia, a relative of Noah Webster. He "was born at Lebanon, Connecticut, in 1725, and graduated at Yale College in 1746, studied theology, and preached for a year. Removing to Philadelphia in 1755, he was an ardent supporter of the patriot cause, and in 1776 began to write on currency. . . . When the Constitution was adopted, much as it failed to meet some of Webster's desires in particulars he became one of the strongest pleaders" (*Old South Leaflets*, Vol. VIII, p. 216, leaflet No. 186). Madison referred to him as "an able, though not conspicuous citizen" (Hannis Taylor, *The Origin and Growth of the American Constitution*, p. 7).

The Charles Pinckney referred to in the quotation from Hannis Taylor above set out, was from Charleston, South Carolina. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention and offered written suggestions for the drafting of the Constitution but he was not a member of the committee which actually drafted it. His relative, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, was also a member of the Convention and is said to have "secured the insertion in the Constitution of the clause that 'no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the authority of the United States'" (*Encyclopaedia Americana*, Vol. 22, p. 94).

The "Virginia Plan," referred to in the quotation from Hannis Taylor, was presented to the Convention by Edmund Randolph. It advocated a strongly centralized government with a plural executive. Randolph refused to sign the Constitution but afterward advocated its ratification by the state of Virginia (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXII, (11th ed.), p. 886). "In early life Edmund Randolph was a deist. . . . In the Revolution the English Church in Virginia could not be broken to the measure of the era in which it fell; and presently the era fell on it and ground it to powder. . . . Williamsburgh and Fredericksburgh, — were the especial centres of freethought in this country. . . . Randolph, under such domestic regime, became a member of the English Church at the time when it was undergoing a process of disestablishment and puritanization. . . . The following

is his [Randolph's] picture of the relative condition of the English Church and Presbyterians at the beginning of the Revolution: 'The two sects were contrasted by some striking circumstances. The Presbyterian clergy were indefatigable. Not depending upon the dead letter of written sermons, they understood the mechanism of haranguing, and have often been whetted in dispute on religious liberty, as nearly allied to civil. Those of the Church of England were planted on glebes, with comfortable homes, decent salaries, some perquisites and a species of rank which was not wholly destitute of unction.... The dissenters, on the other hand, were fed and clothed only as they merited the gratitude of their congregations. A change or modification of the ancient regime carried no terrors to their imagination' (Moncure Daniel Conway, *Edmund Randolph*, pp. 156-58).

There are interesting facts with reference to the respective parts Hamilton and Webster played in suggesting the holding of the Constitutional Convention and in initiating the project. "In 1780, long before the Articles of Confederation had been adopted, he [Hamilton] wrote a long and earnest letter to James Duane, the burden whereof was his conviction of the existence of this grand need [the holding of a convention to draft an efficient, coercive, national constitution]. It is upon the strength of this letter, that the honor is claimed for Hamilton of being the first to conceive and recommend the scheme of a Convention for the purpose of forming an entirely new system of union and government, and so far as I am aware it is true that no other expression of the same opinion is to be found of the like early date. But the communication was made only in private correspondence, and the first public proposition to the same effect is found in a pamphlet published in May, 1781, written by one Pelatiah Webster, 'an able though not conspicuous citizen' according to the description of Mr. Madison. . . . and the next and more efficient move came from Hamilton at whose suggestion in the summer of 1782 the legislature in New York was persuaded to pass resolutions recommending the holding of such a convention" John T. Morse, Jr., *The Life of Alexander Hamilton*, pp. 180-81).

52. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. VII, p. 567.

53. It is an interesting subject how Madison got the sobriquet "Father of the Constitution." It is notable that John Quincy Adams in his memorial eulogy on the occasion of his death did not so much credit him in respect of the composition of the document as he enlarged upon his work for religious liberty, his early advocacy of federal union of the colonies and his most effective service in getting Virginia to ratify it as apparently the last state necessary to make it effective (see John Quincy Adams, *An Eulogy on the Life and Character of James Madison*, September 27, 1836, published by John H. Eastburn, City Printer, No. 18 State Street, Boston, 1836). "In the Virginia convention for ratification of the Constitution [June 1788], when eight states had ratified and it seemed that Virginia's vote would be needed to make the necessary nine [New Hampshire's

favorable vote was cast only shortly before that of Virginia] and it appeared that New York would vote against the Constitution if Virginia did not ratify it, Madison was called upon to defend that instrument again, and he appeared at his best against its opponents,—Patrick Henry, George Mason, James Monroe, Benjamin Harrison, William Grayson and John Tyler. He answered their objections in detail, calmly and with an intellectual power and earnestness that carried the convention. The result was victory" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XVII (11th ed.), p. 285).

There is apparently common agreement that Madison, as a member of the committee, had a major role in composing the Constitution of the United States from the articles which had been agreed upon by the Convention, although as to his originality in general it has been noted that "Madison in all his life never contributed a striking aphorism to the language, nor a frequently quotable sentence. . . . He became so intent on putting 'proper words in their proper places' that he found no place for the vigor of simplicity" (Irving Brandt, *James Madison, the Virginia Revolutionist*, pp. 62-63). As to his knowledge of books it has been said that of the members of the Convention "Madison probably had no equal, except Hamilton, and possibly Ellsworth" (Sidney Howard Gay, *James Madison*, [American Statesmen Series], p. 31). In his support of ratification of the Constitution by Virginia he was opposed by both Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry (John Quincy Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37). In this connection Adams in his address used the phrase, "the ratification of the Convention of Virginia in 1788 had affixed the seal of James Madison as the father of the Constitution of the United States" (*ibid.*, p. 84). Madison kept the most extensive notes on the proceedings of the Convention. "Madison, who was a wary as well as sagacious statesman, carried the first ten amendments through the first Congress" (*Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 7, p. 568). He was the last survivor of the members of the Convention, having lived to the age of eighty-five years. He deserves to be revered as the "Father of the Constitution of the United States."

54. "The environment into which young Madison was born had precisely the character necessary to produce that peculiar combination of democratic and aristocratic inclinations that was to dominate the genius of the future statesman and philosopher. The counties of the Piedmont section, including Orange and Albemarle, the homes of Madison and Jefferson, respectively, were 'strongholds of democracy.' Here were the principal centers of revolt against entails and primogeniture, against slavery and the Established Church" (Edward McNall Bruce, *James Madison, Philosopher of the Constitution*).

Excerpts from Irving Brandt, *James Madison, the Virginia Revolutionist*: "It appears that he entered the school of the Scotch pedagogue [Donald Robertson] shortly after his eleventh birthday, and remained for more than five years. This makes the training under Robertson bulk larger in Madison's education than has been sup-

posed. . . . Donald Robertson, born in 1717 — in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, it is thought — received his education in Aberdeen and Edinburgh and came to Virginia in 1753" (p. 60). "Late in his career Madison is reported to have said of him: 'All that I have been in life I owe to that man'" (p. 63). "Madison [in choosing a college] was out of sympathy with the established church in which his father was a vestryman, and his father was out of sympathy with its heightening episcopalianism" (p. 68). "His knowledge of the relationship of the New Jersey school to the conflict then raging came from his tutor" (pp. 68-69). "One graduate of Princeton [Francis Alison] on August 1, 1769, wrote: 'Our Jersey College is now talking as if she was to be the bulwark against Episcopacy'" (p. 69). "From the angle of faculty contacts, however, going to Princeton was like returning to an enlarged and more mature Scotch boarding school. In place of Donald Robertson he has as his mentor President John Witherspoon, another product of Edinburgh University, not unlike Robertson in scholarly attainments" (p. 73). "His [Witherspoon's] coming to Princeton, in 1768, may have been the final factor that sent Madison there, for it meant a continuation of the anti-church power policy of Presidents Davies and Finley under which the Martin brothers (one of whom had been a tutor of Madison at home) were trained" (p. 74). "[Witherspoon], at first, a rebel against church authority in Scotland and, finally, a rebel against King George in America" (p. 75). "The campaign against a state church, in which Madison participated as a college student [in the American Whig Society] merged so easily into the general current of revolutionary activities. By opposing the extension of ecclesiastical authority, the opponents of church establishment fought the extension of British authority, and in curtailment of British authority they saw a firmer groundwork for religious freedom. Thus, long before the desire for independence took an open possession of the minds of colonial Whigs, their policies led in that direction" (p. 85). "The religious issue greased the path toward revolution for those who conscientiously opposed the union of church and state. Deep convictions on points such as these were held by the young men who dealt with lighter subjects on the college forum" (pp. 85-86). In a letter in 1774 to William Bradford, Jr., of Philadelphia, afterward attorney-general in Washington's administration, Madison wrote: "If the Church of England had been the established and general religion in all the Northern colonies, as it has been among us here, and uninterrupted harmony had prevailed throughout the continent, it is clear to me that slavery and subjection might and would have been gradually insinuated among us" (*Gay, James Madison*, pp. 13-14). "An Established Church . . . he believed to be dangerous to liberty" (*ibid.*, p. 17).

"In Orange County, where the Madisons lived, persecution of dissenters was rife. . . . From Princeton Madison brought a terrible touchstone for the establishment in Virginia, as well as evangelical devoutness" (*Conway, op. cit.*, p. 161).

His [Madison's] theological studies bore good fruit later as evidenced by the stand he took for religious liberty.<sup>56</sup>

Members of the convention which drew up the Constitution of the United States were guests in the home of the Rev. William Marshall, the pastor of an Associate Presbyterian (afterward United Presbyterian) congregation in Philadelphia.<sup>57</sup> John Adams, second President of the United States, in a letter to his daughter in 1777, gave a graphic description of a worship service he attended in that church and he described the minister as "pious and zealous" in religion, "orthodox in politics" and "an ardent patriot."<sup>58</sup>

In order to get the Constitution adopted by the colonies a propaganda campaign was carried on through *The Federalist* papers which were published in newspapers. These were written by three men, Hamilton, Madison, and John Jay. (Hamilton originated the plan and "wrote considerably more than half of the numbers.")<sup>59</sup> Jay had been a member of the Continental Congress which formulated and adopted the Declaration of Independence. He was of Huguenot (French Reformed [Presbyterian]) descent.<sup>60</sup>

Benjamin Franklin was a member of the Convention which drafted the Constitution and has been called "the wisest member" of it.<sup>61</sup> He wrote in his autobiography

56. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

57. Edgar and Foster, *The United Presbyterian*, Oct. 9, 1950, p. 11.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

59. Lodge, *Alexander Hamilton*, p. 66.

60. "The opinion of the *Federalist* has always been considered of great authority. It is a complete commentary on our constitution; and is appealed to by all parties in the questions to which that instrument has given birth. Its intrinsic merit entitles it to this high rank; and the part two of its authors performed in framing the constitution, put it very much in their power to explain the views with which it was framed" (Chief Justice John Marshall, opinion in *Cohens v. Virginia*, 6 Wheat. 265, 418, [19 U. S. 265], 5 Law ed. 257, 294 [1821]).

61. By common consent of the members of the convention it was

that he "had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian."<sup>62</sup>

Of seven presidents who were at the head of the Philadelphia Congress during the Revolution, three were of Huguenot [French Reformed (Presbyterian)] parentage.<sup>63</sup>

Parenthetically, reference is made to the fact of the continuation of Calvinistic leadership after the Revolution.

It is an amazing fact that nine or ten of the Presidents of the United States out of twenty-six have been of Ulster [Scotch-Irish Presbyterian] extraction, and when we remember that the Ulster Scots formed less than one-sixth of the population of the States at the time of the War of Independence, we are still more astonished.<sup>64</sup>

It is said that Benjamin Harrison was the first President who was an "actual member of any church."<sup>65</sup>

The record of history is that not only the principal architects of our form of civil government were men of Presbyterian background but that the principal supporters of the Revolution were such also. Secular historians, such as George Bancroft who is the principal historian of our colonial period and who was not a Presbyterian, support these facts.

Bancroft wrote that "the first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain

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agreed that Franklin should act as chairman should Washington be absent (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XI (11th ed.), p. 28). He was experienced in constitution making, having made the first draft of the Articles of Confederation, "the original draft, . . . made as early as the 21st of July, 1775, by Dr. Franklin and preserved in his handwriting" (Hannis Taylor, *The Origin and Growth of the American Constitution*, p. 21).

62. *Harvard Classics*, Vol. 1, p. 80.

63. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States*, Vol. I (Steele), p. 64.

64. Woodburn, *The Ulster Scot*, p. 383.

65. *The World Almanac 1940*, p. 326.

came not from the Puritans of New England, nor the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.”<sup>66</sup> He observed that “the Presbyterians, true to their tradition, hold it right to war against tyranny.”<sup>67</sup> “The Presbyterians supported the cause of independence and indeed the American Revolution was,” according to Bancroft, “but the application of the principles of the Reformation to civil government.”<sup>68</sup>

Other standard authorities corroborate the major role of the Presbyterian constituency in the war for independence and in the setting up of the new government.

The Presbyterians had come to numerical prominence through the great Scotch-Irish immigration of the eighteenth century and had grown more rapidly than any other colonial religious body in the two generations immediately preceding the Revolution. By 1757 they were stronger than all other religious bodies combined in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. . . . It has been stated that “the two churches [Presbyterian and Congregational] combined had the ecclesiastical control of the American colonies” and that upon their joint action depended to a large degree the destinies of America. . . . Both Congregationalists and Presbyterians were Calvinists.<sup>69</sup>

English Puritanism was in its beginning predominately Presbyterian; both in doctrine and polity it was Calvinistic and aimed at displacing the episcopal government of the Church of England with the Presbyterian polity — the prelate to give place to the presbytery.<sup>70</sup>

66. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World*, p. 252.

67. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. IV, p. 329.

68. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 271.

69. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture 1765-1840*, p. 3.

70. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, pp. 73-74.

It is interesting to note here the corroboration of these conclusions of American writers by a Scotch-Irish writer in a book published in London.

It is not a cause for wonder that when these emigrants [from Ulster in 1771-1773] reached America, they were full of resentment against England and the Anglican Church, with the result that when civil war commenced in 1775 between England and America, the most determined on the side of those who rebelled were the Ulster Scots. While almost one-third of the white population of the Colonists was in secret or open sympathy with England, the general testimony of contemporary and later writers is that the Ulster Scots were found uniformly opposed to the British. . . . "They supplied some of the best soldiers of Washington. The famous Pennsylvania line was mostly Irish."

In the first years of the war the greatest blow the English arms sustained was the defeat and surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga in October, 1777 [listed in Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles*, pp. 367-393, "among those few battles of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes"] and there the Ulster Scots, hardy and skilled marksmen, took a leading part in the capture of the British army. During the following winter the army of Washington was in dire straits. He established himself in winter quarters at Valley Forge. . . . Many of the men under his command deserted him, others grumbled, but the Ulster Scots endured every privation without a murmur.

The victory of the Cowpens was one of the greatest episodes of the war. The hero of the battle was Daniel Morgan, an elder of the Presbyterian Church, who was born in Ballinascream, Co. Derry. With his Irish-American soldiers he defeated twice the number of English troops. The most illustrious American, next to Washington, was Henry Knox, another Ulster Scot, who was the son of a Donegal Irishman. He organized Washington's artillery, and fought in every battle under him. Another leading general was Anthony Wayne, who was born of Ulster parents in Penn-

sylvania. At Yorktown, the final and crowning victory of the war, the charge of Wayne and the bayonets of his men were irresistible. His greatest achievement, however, was the storming and capturing of Stony Point on the river Hudson.

The town of Londonderry in New Hampshire sent more soldiers to aid Washington's armies than any other town. . . . In 1780 when the British had overrun Georgia and South Carolina, and were in the act of reducing North Carolina to submission . . . they [the Scotch-Irish back-woodsmen] gathered together and made a flying march under the command of five colonels, all of whom were elders in the church, and won the dramatic battle of King's Mountain, defeating an equal number of brave men in a strong position under an able leader. "The victory was of far-reaching importance, and ranks among the decisive battles of the revolution. It was the first great success of the Americans in the South, the turning-point in the southern campaign, and it brought cheer to the patriots throughout the Union. Its immediate effect was to cause Cornwallis to retreat from North Carolina" [Roosevelt, *Episodes from the Winning of the West*, p. 24]. It was the first step towards his capture at Yorktown, and this led to the final defeat of England.

At first when the war began the colonists did not dream of separating from Great Britain, but soon the thought possessed their minds that they would strive for independence; this idea was born among the immigrants from Ulster. Bancroft, the historian of the United States, says, "the first public voice in America for dissolving all connection with Great Britain came not from the Puritans of New England, the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians." The first body of clergy of any denomination openly to recognize it was the influential Presbytery of Hanover, Virginia. Had it not been for these Ulster Scots who were driven to America by English persecution, the Puritans of New England would, in all probability, not have secured independence at that time. . . . They [the Scotch-Irish] played a great part — perhaps

the greatest—in building up the largest Republic in the world.<sup>71</sup>

A factor of peculiar significance in determining Presbyterian attitudes toward the revolt against the mother country was the fact that the greatest proportion of them were recent immigrants from Ulster. Their resentment against England was still hot within them.<sup>72</sup>

At the battle of King's Mountain [October 7, 1780], the turning point of the war in the south, the little patriot army under Colonel William Campbell, himself a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian elder, was made up of Presbyterian frontiersmen, five of whose colonels were ruling elders. Generals Morgan and Pickens who led the American forces at the battle of Cowpens a few months later, were also Presbyterian elders.<sup>73</sup>

In the South the Scotch-Irish were the backbone of the American partisan forces.<sup>74</sup>

A like spirit of independence prevailed in the highlands which hold the head-springs of the Yadkin and the Catawba. The region was peopled chiefly by Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish descent, who brought to the New World the creed, the spirit of resistance, and the courage of the Covenanters.<sup>75</sup>

The decisive role which the Scotch-Irish played in the war for independence justifies further reference to the facts of history in Northern Ireland under British rule which produced their purpose and spirit. This can be most adequately given by further quotations from the London publication, *The Ulster Scot*, by James B. Woodburn, as follows:

Attempts had been made at different times by Ulster Scot to settle in America. The first was in 1636

71. Woodburn, *The Ulster Scot*, pp. 222-28 (London, 2nd ed., 1915).

72. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840*, p. 9.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

74. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXII, (11th ed.), p. 292.

75. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 577.

when Blair and Livingstone endeavored to cross the Atlantic in order to avoid religious persecution. Their plans were only defeated, as we saw, by the fury of the storms they encountered. In 1682 the thoughts of Ulster Presbyterians again turned to America, as the prelatic Church was once more wreaking its vengeance upon them. . . .

There were two great causes which, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, increased this emigration to America; the first was the restrictions on the woolen trade passed in 1698, which destroyed the commerce of Ireland; and the second was the enforcing of the Sacramental Test Act of 1704, which prevented any Presbyterian holding an office, civil or military, under the Crown. From that time and during the remainder of Queen Anne's reign, as we have seen, the Presbyterian ministers and people were harassed almost beyond endurance, and this further added to the number of emigrants. Those who crossed the sea during these thirty years [1682-1712] settled chiefly in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Carolina.

The second tide of emigration to America dates from the year 1718. That year forms a landmark in the history of Ulster emigration, for it was then that the exodus assumed overwhelming proportions. It continued in a constant stream for almost thirty years. About 1718 the rents were raised by many of the landlords. . . . Such was the attachment between a minister and his people that entire congregations, led by their beloved pastors, left the country forever. The Rev. James M'Gregor, minister of Ag-hadoey in the County of Londonderry, crossed the Atlantic that summer with a large number of his people. Before leaving he preached to his congregation from the words of Moses, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not hence." He gives us his reasons for setting out — first to avoid oppression and cruel bondage; second, to shun persecution and designed ruin; third, to withdraw from the communion of idolators; and, lastly, to have freedom of worship" (pp. 212-15).

When we add together all the emigrants who landed that year [1729] at the port of Philadelphia,

we find that there were ten Irish emigrants to one from all other European countries" (p. 217, note 1).

The year 1740 was marked by a great famine; it is computed that at least 400,000 people perished in Ireland. For several years afterwards we are told "12,000 emigrants annually left Ulster for the American Plantations." This depopulation of Ulster continued until the year 1750 when it began to decrease. For the first year or two after 1718, the emigrants went to the New England Colonies as we have seen in the case of M'Gregor and his congregation, but these colonies had State Churches, and did not allow freedom of worship, so later arrivals pushed their way in two great parallel streams through the settled portions of the country to the outskirts of civilization, where they had to contend constantly with the Indians. The colonists who had come to America from other countries had generally forced the earlier settlers inland, and settled in places of security along the seaboard. . . . But it was not so with the Ulster Scots. They plunged as Roosevelt tells us [*Episodes from the Winning of the West*, chap. ii], "into the wilderness as the leaders of the white advance."

There were three reasons why both these streams of Ulstermen went so far from the settled part of the country. The first was that they might have liberty to worship God as their fathers did: there was burned into their very soul the memory of English ingratitude and English persecution. The second reason was that they were determined to have nothing more to do with a settled government, which to them had proved in Ireland only another name for tyranny, and they went to those regions where they would be beyond the reach of any civil authority. The third reason was that the land beyond the pale of civilization was cheap, and large families could be supported at small expense. The Northern stream of emigrants, which landed in America at the port of Philadelphia, pushed past the Quakers and the Dutch, and settled upon the dangerous Indian frontier on the edge of the great forest range; while the Southern stream pressed forward from the port of Charleston in South Carolina past the seaboard colonies, and settled on the foothills that act as sentinels to the Alleghanies.

They reached those mountains at their two extremities about seven hundred miles apart . . . until after some years they met and interposed a long thin barrier against the Indian" (pp. 217-19).

The people who left Ulster during the first three quarters of the eighteenth century amounted to 200,000, and they were almost entirely Ulster Scots. (In 1760 there were 300 Presbyterian congregations in the districts where the Ulster Scots settled. In 1776 there were about 400,000 Ulster Scots in the various states.) Arthur Young, who visited Ireland in 1776, says that the spirit of emigrating was confined to the Presbyterian religion. He adds, "The Catholics never went; they seem not only tied to the country, but almost to the parish in which their ancestors lived" (pp. 227-28).

Summing up the causes of the emigration, we find the first was the destruction of the woolen trade of Ireland by the repressive laws forced through the English Parliament by English manufacturers which caused much unemployment, especially among Presbyterians, who were chiefly farmers and traders. The second was the continual persecution they endured at the hands of the bishops of the Irish Episcopal Church. The blame for the unjust and galling measures which were passed must be laid at the door of the Government of Ireland. To be quite fair, the final blame rests with the Bench of Bishops of the Irish House of Lords, who were far more hostile to the Scots in Ulster than to the Catholics in any part of Ireland. All the authorities are agreed upon this point, that these bishops were the chief instruments in putting the Presbyterians of Ulster under humiliating religious disabilities. The third cause was the payment of tithes to the Episcopal Church. The fourth cause was poor harvests. . . . The fifth cause was the raising of the rents by the landlords of the country" (pp. 228-29).

In this war, [the American Revolution], both the Synod of Ulster and the Seceders naturally sympathized with the Americans. "The Presbyterians of Ulster," says Dr. [William] Campbell [minister of Armagh and in 1775 Moderator of the Synod of Ulster], "condemned this war as unjust, cruel, and de-

testable. They beheld it with anguish and with horror, as the most wanton, unprovoked despotism. Their friends and relations abounded in the different provinces of America, and they heard with pride that they composed the flower of Washington's army, being carried on by a native love of liberty, to encounter every danger for the safety of their adopted country" (pp. 226-27).<sup>76</sup>

Bancroft, the American historian, in more brief statements, sets forth the same facts and conclusions as to conditions in Northern Ireland which caused the Scotch-Irish immigrants to be so militant in the struggle for independence, as shown by the following quotations:

[About the time of the Revolution of 1688 in England] in Ireland persecution was double-edged; there was not even a toleration act. . . . To an act of terrible severity . . . provisions were attached, to use the words of a British historian, that "if, on the death of a Protestant land-owner, the Protestant next of kin, to whom the estate would lapse, happened to be a Presbyterian, he was to be passed over in favor of a more remote member of the establishment." The English test act was introduced as a parenthesis. The Presbyterians, the Independents, the Huguenot immigrants, the Quakers, were swept under the same political disabilities, and were cut off from the army, militia, the civil service, the commission of peace and from seats in the municipal corporations.<sup>77</sup>

To Queen Anne's bill [applicable to Ireland] . . . a clause was added in England, and ratified by the Irish parliament, that none should be capable of any public employment, or of being in the magistracy of any city, who did not receive the sacrament according to the English test act; this disenfranchising the whole body of Presbyterians . . . in Ireland, the disenfranchised Scotch Presbyterians, who still drew their ideas of Christian government from the Westminster Confession, began to believe that they were

76. Woodburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-29.

77. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 191-92.

under no religious obligation to render obedience to the British government. . . . They were willing to quit a soil which was endeared to them by no traditions; and the American colonies opened their arms to receive them. They began to change their abode as soon as they felt oppression; and every successive period of discontent swelled the tide of emigration. . . . Their training in Ireland had kept the spirit of liberty and the readiness to resist unjust government as fresh in their hearts as though they had just been listening to the preachings of Knox or musing over the political creed of the Westminster Assembly. They brought to America no loyal love for England; and their experience and their religion alike bade them meet oppression with resistance.<sup>78</sup>

The Old World history of the Scots (especially at a little earlier period) runs quite parallel to this Ulster history, further demonstrating that it came naturally to Presbyterians (Scots and Scotch-Irish) to fight the English. Both in Scotland and in Ulster the English government and the Anglican Church had attempted to force the episcopal form of church government on them against their will. This was even more unbearable to them than economic injustices.

It had not been very long before our revolutionary period that there had been bloodshed between the Scots and the government forces. This had been a persecution of long standing. In the middle of the seventeenth century there had been prolonged warfare. The following quotations from a work written from the Scottish standpoint show the intensity of the conflict and something as to the issues involved:

The abolition of Episcopacy by the Glasgow Assembly in 1638 and the Restoration of the Presbyterian system were an open challenge to the King. Charles must either give way or fight, and, as he sincerely believed that a Church without bishops was no true Church, he could not give way . . . Just as

78. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 359-60.

Charles thought that a Church which was not governed by bishops was no Church at all, and that therefore it was his duty to force all his subjects, in Scotland as in England, to become Episcopalians, so the Scots thought that a Church which was not governed according to the Presbyterian system was no Church at all, and that therefore it was their duty to make a Presbyterian, not only of every Scotsman, but, if they could manage it, of every Englishman. . . . After the death of Charles II in 1685 and the accession of the Catholic James VII — James II of England — the plight of the Presbyterians became worse than it had been before. Parliament declared that the taking of the Covenants was a treasonable offence, and made preaching at any kind of conventicle, or mere attendance at a field conventicle, punishable by death. It was in vain that the Earl Argyll, the chief of the great Clan Campbell, returned from his exile in Holland to head a rebellion against King James. Disputes broke out among his followers; he disbanded his army, was captured, taken to Edinburgh, and executed. . . . After Argyll's rebellion had collapsed, those who agreed to accept the Test [requiring renouncing of Covenants] were released; the remainder were transported to the American Colonies.<sup>79</sup>

The following quotation is taken from a work written from the English standpoint:

The Church Assembly at Glasgow, to which the lay members came up armed and attended, [in 1638] defied the King as the long Parliament defied him four years later. When he dissolved the Assembly, it sat on, declared Episcopacy abolished and restored the full Presbyterian government of the Church. The action of the Glasgow Assembly was supported by the Earl of Argyll, the head of the Campbells, the most powerful fighting clan in the Highlands. That day he began the connection of his House with the Presbyterians and popular cause in the Lowlands, an alliance which for more than a century to come re-

79. Robert L. Mackie, *A Short History of Scotland*, (London, 1931), pp. 295-317.

mained a constant and often a determining factor in Scottish history.<sup>80</sup>

The intensity of the spirit of this long conflict, especially as to the feeling in North Ireland, was forcibly expressed by Lord Rosebery, who said that the Scotch-Irish "are, I believe, without exception the toughest, the most dominant, and most irresistible race that exists in the universe at the moment."

"Isaac Sharpless, the Quaker historian, states that as far as Pennsylvania was concerned, the 'Revolution was three-fourths, at least, a Presbyterian [Scotch-Irish] movement.'"<sup>81</sup> "Joseph Galloway, a former speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly and an active Loyalist, in his testimony before the English Parliament ascribed to the Presbyterians the principal responsibility for the beginning of the revolt against the mother country. Testifying in 1779, he asserted that of those in rebellion against England, about one-half were Irish [Presbyterians]."<sup>82</sup>

When account is taken of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, the Germans of the middle and southern colonies, and the New England Congregationalists, it is safe to say that the bulk of the revolutionary armies came from dissenters of the Reformed or Calvinistic sects.<sup>83</sup>

Even the clergy of the Presbyterian denominations were possessed of the Revolutionary spirit as illustrated by the following incident:

The advance landed at Elizabethtown before daylight, June 6th [1780]. . . . The British, reaching Connecticut Farms, sacked and burned the town. The wife of Reverend James Caldwell, the "rebel firebrand," was deliberately shot through the window of the parsonage, while, it is said, kneeling by her bedside, holding the hand of her little child engaged in

80. Trevelyan, *History of England*, (London, 1926), pp. 399-400.

81. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

83. Ralph Barton Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy*, p. 190.

prayer. After the army had passed, the neighbors with difficulty rescued the body from the ruins of the burning building.

Greene, who was in command, gallantly defended the bridges across the Rahway. On that day, said Irving, "no one showed more ardor in the fight than Caldwell, the chaplain. The image of his murdered wife was before his eyes. Finding the men in want of wadding, he galloped to the Presbyterian church, and brought thence a quantity of Watt's psalm and hymn books, which he distributed for the purpose among the soldiers. 'Now boys,' cried he, 'put Watts into them!' The advance of the enemy was finally checked.<sup>84</sup>

Another example of a Presbyterian minister who was typically active in the cause of independence should be mentioned, especially because of his influence upon Patrick Henry,<sup>85</sup> one of the prominent Revolutionary patriots. He was the Reverend Samuel Davies, of Hanover County, Virginia, whose work is set forth in the following quotation:

The political fame of Patrick Henry has obscured the fact that from his eleventh to his twenty-second year he listened to the patriotic sermons of the Reverend Samuel Davies, widely acclaimed as the most eloquent pulpit orator of his day. Davies was a Presbyterian minister of Hanover County, Virginia, and afterward the fourth president of the College of New Jersey [Princeton]. He not only founded the first

84. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States* (Steele), Vol. I, p. 299.

85. Patrick Henry's "enthusiasm [in independence activities] was nourished by his partiality for the dissenters from the established church. He often listened to them while they were waging their steady and finally effective war against the burthens of that church, and from a repetition of his sympathy with the history of their sufferings he unlocked the human heart, and transferred into civil discussions many of the bold licenses which prevailed in [the] religious. If he was not a constant hearer and admirer of that stupendous master of the human passions, George Whitfield, he was a follower, a devotee of some of his most powerful disciples at least" (Moncure Daniel Conway, *op. cit.*, p. 30).

presbytery in Virginia but was "the animating soul of the whole dissenting interest in Virginia and North Carolina," [V. L. Collins, *Princeton*, Oxford University Press, 1914, p. 59], traveling widely, preaching in many pulpits, and vigorously defending the civil rights and liberties of nonconformists against Anglican authorities. It is said that Patrick Henry adopted this preacher's oratory as his model, but he learned more than eloquence from an orator who taught that the British constitution is "the voluntary compact of sovereign and subject," and who exhorted his hearers "to secure the inestimable blessings of liberty."<sup>86</sup>

That long-continued fight for lay control in church government was apparently, in the settled judgment of John Adams, possibly the principal cause of the colonists' finally deciding to seek independence. In 1815 he stated that "the apprehension of episcopacy contributed, fifty years ago, as much as any other cause, to . . . urge them [the common people among the colonists] to close thinking on the constitutional authority of Parliament over the colonies. . . . This was a fact as certain as any in the history of North America."<sup>87</sup>

The voice of laymen in the government of the church and the separation of the church from the civil government, as they existed in Geneva under Calvin, became the nursery of government by the governed. To quote Bancroft the historian again, he called Geneva "the fertile seed-plot of democracy."<sup>88</sup> He wrote that "the Revolution of 1776 so far as it was affected by religion was a Presbyterian measure."<sup>89</sup>

Albert Hyma, biographer, in his *Life of John Calvin* published in 1943, has emphasized Calvinism's large contribution to American history in the following statement:

86. Ralph Barton Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy*, pp. 203-4.

87. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

88. Demarest, *History and Characteristics of the Reformed Dutch Church* (1856), p. 143.

89. Alma Dykman, in *Christian Union Herald*, Oct. 16, 1943.

The influence of Calvinism in the English colonies of North America, and subsequently in the United States was simply enormous. . . . No student of American history can expect to become thoroughly familiar with the subject until he has carefully studied the career of John Calvin and the influence of Calvinism.<sup>90</sup>

The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* makes a similar statement concerning its influence in a still wider area, including America.

"[Calvin's] system . . . was, in a very real sense, the reflection of his own mind — severe, grand, logical, and daring in the heights to which it ascends, yet humble in its constant reversion to Scripture as its basis. Its influence on posterity has been yet more remarkable. It passed through the Creeds into the thoughts of men, moulded the life of nations, became the soul of Puritanism in England, of Republicanism in Holland, of the Covenanting struggle in Scotland, of democratic institutions in America, identifying itself in every land to which it went with the undying principles of civil freedom.<sup>91</sup>

Secular history records the fact that it just seemed to come "natural" to the American colonists to found their government as a republic.

It is a noticeable fact that the founders of our government, when they threw off the bondage of Great Britain, had no direct intention of founding a republic. That idea came only as a natural fruit from the blossom of free thought, borne by the tree of liberty, planted so long before on American soil. . . . They became a republic, as that seemed the only thing to do. . . . The colonies, for nearly a century and a half, all unconsciously, had wrought out the idea of a republic. It now came as natural as the rain and the dew from heaven.<sup>92</sup>

90. Albert Hyma, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

91. *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 148.

92. Barnes, *op. cit.*, (Steele), Vol. I, p. 176.

They just naturally used the framework with which they were familiar in their Presbyterian church government, for which they had fought so long and which they believed to have been Divinely established.

Since our colonial era, the American way has been increasingly supported and strengthened by other groups not so purely Calvinistic. Such is the great Methodist denomination which was then in process of development in England. It was too new in America at the time of the Revolution to contribute to the movement of history and it was so completely controlled from England that its adherents were embarrassed in their participation in independence activities.

Just ten years previous to the Declaration of Independence, Methodism was brought to America. . . . The American Methodists were greatly embarrassed during the course of the Revolution by John Wesley's strong Toryism and his active support of the colonial policy of Parliament.<sup>93</sup>

In 1777 he [Wesley] called his preachers together to pray "That God would restore the spirit of love and sound mind to the poor deluded rebels in America." . . . The effect of Wesley's strong pro-Tory pronouncements upon American Methodists is obvious. It meant that his followers in America were soon pretty generally considered Tories, even though few of them were actually Tory in sentiment. On March 19, 1776, Asbury confided to his Journal: "I am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America." He further observed that had Mr. Wesley been an American subject he doubtless would have been "as zealous an advocate of the American cause."<sup>94</sup>

In 1776 the Virginia Methodists had presented a petition to the House of Delegates in opposition to a movement spearheaded by the Baptists and other dissenters to bring about separation of Church and State. The Virginia Methodists, the petition states,

93. Sweet, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

wish to dissociate themselves from "common dissenters" and want it understood that this name does not apply to them since they are a "religious society in communion with the Church of England and do all in their power to support the said Church." They conceive that very bad consequences will arise if establishment is abolished, and "pray that the Church of England, as it ever hath been, may continue to be the Established Church." Three years later the Virginia Methodists are lined up with the Baptists and other Virginia dissenters in supporting Jefferson's bill for the establishment of religious freedom in Virginia.<sup>95</sup>

The church polity of the Methodists, being episcopal, does not directly teach government by the governed. However, in doctrine they adhere to the Reformed tenet of the right of private judgment with individual responsibility and as time has passed laymen have been allowed increasing voice in church government.

While Methodist church government is not democratic in form, it may be reasoned that this is somewhat offset psychologically by the discarding by the larger part of Methodist leadership of the doctrine of predestination and their special advocacy of the free agency of man. This emphasis on free agency would seem, theoretically at least, to reinforce the spirit of democracy.

Methodists are among the most typical Americans, as are also Baptists. Both were fundamentally Calvinists originally, the Methodist variations being principally on the tenet of election and on form of church government and the Baptist variations being on emphasis on a single form of baptism and on modified form of church government.

[The Baptists] centered their interest during the years of the Revolution on the achievement of religious liberty....A typical Baptist petition...states...if these things were granted they pledge them-

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

selves to unite with their brethren and to the utmost of their ability promote the common cause.<sup>96</sup>

The Baptists were at all times as thoroughly democratic in spirit and conviction as any group in the colonies, especially centering their efforts upon religious liberty. This discussion does not discount those facts to any extent.

The attempt here is to appraise the factors which principally promoted and dominantly formulated the form of civil government in the United States. Due to their long experience in actually fighting for their right of self-government in their churches in the British Isles, the Pilgrims (Presbyterianized-Congregationalists, including some unqualified Presbyterians) and especially the later Presbyterian immigrants (of nearer the time of the Revolution) had been imbued with irrepressible alertness and militancy with reference to representative constitutional government.

The original Puritans, just as democratic as the Presbyterians, had been in America longer and had long before laid the foundations for popular government. The Presbyterians came at the critical time fresh from the persecutions by the British government in Scotland and northern Ireland (Ulster). This fact accounts for their surprising forwardness in the war for independence and in the drafting of the form for the new government, which Puritans, Baptist, and the great body of inhabitants of the country readily supported. All who adhere to the faith derived from the Reformation, which is the majority of Americans, are contributing through their religious convictions to our distinctive way of life in the special respects herein discussed.

The Dutch churches, having a Presbyterian [republican] form of church polity, naturally accepted the underlying principles of the Revolution.<sup>97</sup>

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-38.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

The Quakers are not commonly regarded as being of the Reformed faith. While they did not contribute perceptibly to the gaining of independence, their practice of church government is wholly consistent with democracy.

Numerous Quaker "Testimonies" both before and after the Declaration of Independence indicate that most of them were opposed to a break with England.<sup>98</sup>

Anglican patriots labored under special handicap and confusion because of the pro-British sentiment among their clergymen, who "became the most effective anti-revolutionary propagandists."<sup>99</sup> Notwithstanding this there were many among them, particularly among their laymen, who supported the cause of independence. As a matter of fact, a majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Anglicans.<sup>100</sup> (At least fourteen of the signers of the Declaration have been identified as Presbyterians.<sup>101</sup>)

Those Anglican laymen were fundamentally Calvinists believing in the right of private judgment and had been "Presbyterianized" in spirit as shown above. They had taken over the government of their congregations through their vestries composed of laymen to an extent that caused the Anglican clergy, especially in England, to pronounce against it as detrimental to the church. Many of the Anglican clergy in America "not only espoused the adverse side, but abandoned their flocks and their country." It is stated that when the British evacuated Philadelphia every clergyman of the Anglican church save one departed with them."<sup>102</sup>

98. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

100. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

101. John Sutherland Bonnell in *Look Magazine*, Mar. 23, 1954, p. 93.

102. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

Of all the colonial religious bodies the Church of England contributed by far the largest proportion of Loyalists. . . . On the other hand . . . they . . . furnished more than their share of the important patriot leadership.<sup>103</sup>

One of the reasons why colonial Anglicans were so divided in their attitudes toward the American Revolution is that they possessed no over-all organization such as the Presbyterians had in their presbyteries and synods, or the Congregationalists and Baptists had in their associations. Not having an effective American agency through which they might express collective opinions, a free rein was given to formulation of individual opinions and convictions.<sup>104</sup>

As to faiths other than Reformed, the Lutheran is the most prominent among Protestants. Lutheranism holds as fundamental responsibility of the individual conscience to God alone in matters of faith and life.<sup>105</sup> But historically that tenet has not been fully developed as applied to the relationship between church and state. Everywhere except in America Lutheranism seems to have established itself, if possible, as a state church, holding that the power of the state is essential to the life of the church. Lutheran churches have not adopted a uniform system of church government. One Lutheran writer has stated:

The Lutheran Church, believing the form of Church government to belong entirely to the accidents of the Church, is ready to adapt its form to changing circumstances. Hence under monarchies, the church is Episcopal; under aristocracies, Presbyterian; and under republics, Congregational.<sup>106</sup>

In the Revolutionary period it was "the attempt of colonial Lutheran leaders to remain neutral."<sup>107</sup>

103. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

105. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 202.

106. R. C. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World*, p. 9; G. Elson Ruff, *What Is a Lutheran?* in *Look Magazine*, Feb. 23, 1954, p. 96.

107. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

In recent American history Lutheranism is following the broader American way, making its own primary tenet applicable to civic and economic life. All Protestant denominations promote democracy automatically — the inevitable fruit of religious doctrine, if not of church polity. From historical studies it seems established that democracy in America was and is such fruit.

Human experience throughout history demonstrates that government buttressed upon religious doctrine is less subject to change. From this it is evident that preservation of the religious tenets which gave rise to democracy will tend to guarantee the permanency of democracy especially in its purer form and even to stabilize it as it exists in modified form in limited monarchies. Without this religious approval and support democracy lacks tenacity. Looking about us we seem to see this demonstrated. The most stable democracies of our day are those in which Protestantism is predominant.

This is not to slight the fact that many of our most loyal citizens are Roman Catholics. At the time of the revolution there were not enough of them to substantially affect the course of our history.

When American Independence was declared, there were few Roman Catholics outside of Maryland and Pennsylvania. In Maryland there were sixteen thousand, and in Pennsylvania about half that number.<sup>108</sup>

In this attempt to discover the motivation of democracy, emphasis has been placed on tenets which have produced and promoted it inevitably from their very nature. The Roman Catholic system is not naturally adapted to promotion of democracy, but in America, where its adherents are in a minority and where many Catholics have attended our public schools, they have shared the democratic spirit and have participated fully in our civic life.<sup>109</sup>

108. Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 580.

109. On the basis of questionnaires sent to 25,000 of 181,000 Prot-

### FREE ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE

Out of the great Reformed tenets emphasizing the rights and responsibilities of individuals have come our national independence and our form of government inherent with the greatest civil liberty known anywhere in the world. In this environment there has inevitably flourished the modern system of free economic enterprise.

It should not seem strange that our country is the outstanding example of representative constitutional government and of individual initiative in economic life. No other country has had dominance of the spiritual indoctrination of this faith in so nearly an uncorrupted or unmodified form.

Quotations indicating the indebtedness of the free enterprise economic system to Calvinism are appropriate. Perhaps because authors such as Max Weber may be regarded as not unqualifiedly favorable to capitalism, their attributing the capitalistic system so largely to Calvinism makes their conclusions as to its source or strength more striking than the statements of others.

Such studies as those of Max Weber and Troeltsch have been at pains to show that Calvinistic spiritual teaching had a distinct bearing upon the emergence of the middle class to economic importance, and upon the rise of capitalism.<sup>110</sup>

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estant ministers of the United States, the *Christian Herald* magazine (Apr., 1954, p. 20) reported an estimated 4,144,366 conversions from Catholicism to Protestantism in the previous ten years. Catholic authorities had previously reported 1,071,897 conversions from Protestantism during the same period. Although the ratio of Protestants to Catholics in the general population is not as great as four to one, it is shown by these figures that the ratio of conversions to Protestantism from Catholicism is four to one.

110. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, p. 101. "Weber and Tawney drew near the truth when they developed the thesis that capitalism was a by-product of Protestantism, especially of the Calvinistic variety" (Irving E. Howard, in *Christianity Today*, Mar. 17, 1958, p. 10).

The Puritan doctrine of "calling," that a person is as divinely called to be a Christian merchant or a Christian sea captain as is one entering the ministry, naturally lent itself to business success. And the very qualities which made for the Christian life, as honesty, sobriety, moderation, faithfulness, made also for economic success. Colonial New England prospered, in spite of its stony soil and inhospitable climate, largely because its Puritan ethics and way of life produced a type of men and women who had a holy concern for the well-being of the family, of the Church and the Commonwealth, as well as for business.<sup>111</sup>

The fact of personal responsibility of the individual to God makes any system other than the free enterprise system measurably violative of the principle of Christian stewardship. As a matter of conscience a man must not attempt to entrust the economic equation of his life to any control whatsoever other than his own.

He must devoutly manage his own productive powers, contributing a portion to distinctively religious purposes. If, for example, to the city council in even a good Christian community should be delegated supervision of his economic life, including the exercise of his liberality, his stewardship would be violated. His productive powers would be put out of balance and his benefactions would be diverted, reduced, withheld, or inordinately made.

The ultimate genius of any people in its secular life inevitably derives from such applicable philosophy as is found in its dominant religious faith. It is only that from which its people do not deviate under any circumstances.

Economic and political institutions are not in themselves the main civilizing forces. Rather, it is the attitude that men take toward these things which is all important. . . . Religion may be defined as the ultimate passion which determines men's attitudes,

111. Sweet, *ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

and so defined, religion becomes the fundamental history-making force.<sup>112</sup>

Religion exercises more control in life than mere intellectual power or physical passion or governmental fiat or economic necessity. The spirit of martyrdom is found less prevalent in any other realm than in the realm of religion.

The stamina of our democracy and of our free enterprise system is derived from these inherent tenets which are undergirded by religious conviction. Their permanence is guaranteed by this spiritual quality which makes our citizens willing to give even life itself in their defense. This is so dominant as to be a unique constituent of the American way of life, few other societies in the world having ever been so possessed by it.

The fact with reference to our way of life which should give us much concern is that it is still going to a too large extent on the momentum of its original propulsion. The challenge to us is that of fealty and activity to revive, strengthen and promote this, as we firmly believe, God-given spiritual philosophy and unique commission.<sup>113</sup>

112. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture 1765-1840*, pp. 312-13.

113. Little reference has been made to the Presbyterians of England itself. The explanation is the nature of this treatise, it being a study of the effect of religion on the secular history of the United States. On that theme, the Presbyterians who came directly from England to America (except those who came with the original Pilgrims) contributed much less than those who came from northern Ireland and Scotland, because the English newcomers at the time of the developing independence crisis were comparatively fewer. Presbyterians in England were always more directly under the repressive powers of the government and their influence was weakened by their strife with the Independents (Congregationalists) who became ascendant under Cromwell. If this treatise were a discussion of the substance of Presbyterian dogma and its general influence on the spiritual philosophy of America, then large space should have been given to the Westminster Confession of Faith formulated (1645-1652) by English, Scotch, and Irish divines. It was adopted by American Congregational churches through the Cambridge Synod and Platform of 1648, except the portions as to church government and discipline (*New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*).

edge, Vol. XII, p. 326). It was formally adopted by American Presbyterian churches at the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia in 1729 with modifications in 1736 as to the authority of the civil magistrate (*ibid.*, p. 326). The antecedents of the United Presbyterian Church of North America had transported the same to America from Scotland where it had been adopted in 1647 (*ibid.*, p. 325). Alexander Hamilton had it at the Constitutional Convention. Both Congregationalists and Presbyterians had essentially the same origin. The Congregationalists later became gradually divergent in the matter of church government. "The first really Puritan congregation was John Knox's in Geneva. To that city, therefore, may be traced, not only the genesis of Scotch Presbyterianism, but also the beginnings of Presbyterianism and Puritanism in England. English nonconformity was largely the result of what the Marion exiles had seen and done abroad" (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X, p. 252). "The Westminster Assembly was overwhelmingly Presbyterian in sentiment and policy, and adorned the few years of the Presbyterian ascendancy [in England] with those classics of English-speaking Presbyterianism which almost make us forget the narrow spirit of the time and are the fine flower of Calvinist dogmatics" (*ibid.*). While there were a few Episcopalians appointed to the Westminster Assembly they eventually withdrew or were excluded or were forbidden by the king to attend (*New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. XII, p. 323). The Independents were few but strong in participation until the Presbyterian polity was adopted when they withdrew (*ibid.*). The Presbyterians "were preponderant from the beginning and gained in strength" (*ibid.*). The Scotch were "the most vigorous element in the assembly. . . . They had a great advantage from the start" (*ibid.*). "The aim of the Scotch was to establish Presbyterianism in England" (*ibid.*). But the government of England became controlled by the Independents and later by the Episcopalians when the king was restored and it has even been said that "the Presbyterian Church of England has no historical kinship to the Westminster Assembly" (*ibid.*, p. 324). "As for subscription to the Confession, it remains a matter of doubt whether the English section of the Westminster divines intended anything more than that the document should be a norm of teaching. On the other hand, the Scotch insisted upon subscription, a course adopted by American Presbyterianism, though in a relaxed form" (*ibid.*, p. 325). During the sessions of the Westminster Assembly "the Scots were sore perplexed. They had entered into an alliance with the English Parliament because they wanted to establish Presbyterianism in England, and because the English Parliament had promised to establish it. Further, as if to show that the Parliament was sincere the Westminster Assembly still continued its deliberations, and still showed itself anxious to defer to the wishes of the Scottish representatives. But it was evident that the English Parliament could not keep to the bargain which it made in the Solemn League and Covenant; the destinies of the country were controlled

no longer by Parliament, but by the army, and the army did not favor the establishment of Presbyterianism in England. Many of the officers and men were, like Cromwell, Independents" (Mackie, *A Short History of Scotland*, p. 304). In addition to the contribution which English Presbyterians made to the writing of the Westminster Confession, American Presbyterians are heavily indebted to them for the celebrated devotional commentary on the Bible produced by Matthew Henry (1662-1714), an English Presbyterian, which is still a standard work in general use. If this were a thesis on church government for a doctorate degree, then an Englishman, Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603), should have been mentioned in tracing his contributions to the systematizing of church polity as established by John Calvin in Geneva and by John Knox in Scotland. Protestantism in America is under permanent obligation to English Puritans of all kinds for inestimable contributions to both creed and polity, but the most determinative factors directly affecting the development of civil and secular life of the colonial period were the principles, practice, and spirit of the New England Pilgrims and the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

### III

#### *THE PHILOSOPHIC BASIS OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM*

It seems inappropriate to leave the establishment of our constitutional representative government on the mere factual basis of American history, as set forth in the foregoing chapter, without more adequate reference to the origin and history of the philosophy which promoted it.

It was not one of the direct objectives of the Protestant Reformation that religion should determine the form of civil government, nor was it anticipated by the Reformers. In fact, Calvin himself, the principal theologian, apparently never apprehended it fully as applied to civil government. It was, so far as he was concerned, an undesigned result.

Calvin was never by intention a political reformer. His interests were always overwhelmingly religious; and the results of Calvinism in the cause of religious freedom were indirect and unexpected, rather than the anticipated consequences of his work. They were the effect of the logic of Calvin's principles, rather than any conscious part of his reformatory aim.<sup>1</sup>

With historical perspective it now appears only too evident that it was no mere fortuity that our democracy was developed from Reformed theology. It was inherent in its very nature and its emergence was inevitable whenever that theology should become ascendant in any constituency. Certain basic tenets assured this.

1. Walker, *John Calvin*, pp. 403-4.

These were especially the tenets which emphasized and developed the rights of individuals, their importance not being due to the realization of their applicability to civil government on the part of original advocates, but to their effect upon the spirit and thinking of the persons who accept and practice them. One was the right of private judgment in the spiritual life of each person,<sup>2</sup> with the consequent individual responsibility. Another was the divine right of self-government in the church.<sup>3</sup>

Both of these were based by John Calvin upon the Scriptures and held by him to be ordained by God himself. In his *Institutes*, "the masterpiece of Protestant theology,"<sup>4</sup> he made the self-government principle as well as the private judgment feature integral parts of his theological system.

It is a legitimate ministry according to the word of God, when those who appear suitable persons are appointed with the consent and approbation of the people (*Inst.*, IV, III, 15).

"[With the pastors and teachers] are to be joined for the government of the church certain pious, grave and holy men as a senate in each church; and to others as deacons, is to be entrusted the care of the poor. The election of the officers in a church is to

2. *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IX, p. 293: "A conviction of individual responsibility and compulsion which Protestants since his [Luther's] time have designated as 'private judgment.' In thus exalting his personal religious and moral convictions above authority and tradition he acted in the spirit of the Renaissance. . . . It has ever since been the problem of Protestantism to reconcile the freedom of the world of man, and of the church, with God's revelation, and to assign to the conscience its proper function as guide of conduct and belief when enlightened by the Gospel, or the law of Christ."

3. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X, p. 620: "A Reformed Church was in theory a democracy, with all spiritual authority deriving from the people."

4. *Ibid.*, p. 147, ". . . a book . . . which had more influence upon the Christian world for at least three hundred and fifty years than any work penned by any man since the days of the apostles" (Smith, *Democracy and the Church*, pp. 212-13).

be with the people, and those duly chosen and called are to be ordained by the laying on of the hands of the pastors" (*ibid.*; IV, III, 4-16).<sup>5</sup>

Under his regime in Geneva "ecclesiastical discipline was delegated to the consistory, composed at first of 18 members, 6 clerical and 12 lay, with Calvin as president.<sup>6</sup>

The two most important facts in human history so far as the establishment of modern representative government is concerned are that in Geneva there actually existed under Calvin government by the governed in the church, and its stability was guaranteed by the religious conviction that it was ordained of God as the only authorized form. Only in Reformed churches did that situation (including both of those facts) exist then or since. (Lutheran churches often have a democratic form, as noted in the last chapter, but not always and not necessarily as a matter of dogma as in most of the Reformed churches.)<sup>7</sup>

The form of church government as first established in Geneva was a modified democracy, a representative form of government. Some have inferred that Calvin believed in government by an aristocracy or an oligarchy. These are terms generally used with opprobrious purpose, and not merely to mean that Calvin wished the government to be by the wise and the good; and the manner of their choice is often ignored. However, "when we let Calvin speak for himself the truth will appear."<sup>8</sup>

Calvin's idea was government by a few wise and devout, but only when duly chosen therefor by the governed. This was representative government, republican government. The members of the Reformed churches were thus

5. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), Vol. V, p. 76.

6. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. V, p. 239.

7. R. C. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World*, p. 9; *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 600; *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. VII, p. 81.

8. Hyma, *Life of John Calvin*, p. 98.

introduced to the experience of self-government as well as to the conviction of its divine sanction. When they set up their civil government they simply used the form to which they were already accustomed in their churches. As said in a previous chapter:

“The ecclesiastical republic in time led on to a political republic.”<sup>9</sup>

With this conclusion of a secular historian the leading Protestant church historian fully agrees:

In the Calvinistic system, laymen took a responsible part in the selection of the clergy and in the management of the affairs of the Church. The privilege of governing themselves, which they enjoyed in the Christian society, they would soon claim in the commonwealth.<sup>10</sup>

In commenting on this historical fact Professor Williston Walker, of Yale University, quoted the picturesque language of King James I of England, in the following passage:

His [Calvin's] principle that officers should serve only with the consent of the congregation over which they were placed, however imperfectly worked out under Genevan conditions, had in it the germ of a real responsibility of ecclesiastical governors to those whom they ruled. Calvin did not carry the principle to its logical consequences; but it is impossible for men long to hold one theory in ecclesiastical and another in civil government. If church officers are responsible to the people they serve, why not kings and magistrates? Scotland and Puritan England asked the question and wrote the answer large in the history of the seventeenth century. King James I, of England, voiced the results of this aspect of Calvinism, and its effects on such theories of the absolute monarchy as he entertained, when he declared at Hampton Court Conference in 1604: “A Scottish Presbytery as well agreth with a Monarchy, as God

9. *Universal World History*, p. 1902.

10. Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 329-30.

and the Devill. Then Jacke, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my councell, and all our proceedings.”<sup>11</sup>

The Anglican clergy in attendance at the Hampton Court Conference supported the attitude of the king, declaring “that the insults James showered on their opponents were inspired by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>12</sup> Thereupon the king announced the policy of the Crown in these words: “I will make them [the Puritans] conform or I will harry them out of the land!”<sup>13</sup>

Such attitude on the part of the government directly contributed to the emigration of the Puritans to New England with the purpose of civil self-government as well as church self-government being a natural development.

Under the Reformed regime at Geneva, the world was given the plan and demonstration of government by the governed, and also the fundamental conception of constitutional government which is inherent in Protestantism as there and elsewhere established at that time. The Reformation established the Scriptures as the sole authoritative source of religious faith and practice. The written creeds have always been universally held by Protestants to be subordinate standards only, the Word of God being “the supreme and infallible rule of faith and practice.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus existed a firmly established system of two laws, one supreme, the other subordinate; one final, the other subject to revision in conformity with the supreme law.

11. Williston Walker, *John Calvin, the Organizer of Reformed Protestantism 1509-1564*, pp. 407-8.

12. Green, *History of the English People*, Vol. III, pp. 58-59.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 59; King James had said in Parliament in 1604: “The sect of Puritans is insufferable in any well-governed commonwealth” (*Bancroft, History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 231. “In the year 1604 alone three hundred Puritan ministers were silenced, imprisoned, or exiled. . . . Thus the conspiracy between the Episcopal Church and the court, in favor of absolute monarchy, was consummated” (*ibid.*, p. 232).

14. Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IX, p. 240.

When set up for civil government this two-laws system makes the written constitution supreme to define and limit the powers of the legislative branch of the government in making the subordinate enactments.

The habit of thought of the Protestant constituency of the American colonies as to their church government made in their minds the natural form for human government that of a written constitution. They had not only practiced it uniformly in their churches but had the long record of controversy, even of warfare, in their history in its establishment, and they spontaneously used it in setting up their civil government, as shown in the preceding chapter.

It should be noted also that not only was the constitutional technique for civil government supplied in this way, but some of the most important subject matter for the constitution of the United States, for example, freedom of religion, was thus furnished.

One of the original features of Reformed theology was the separation of church and state. This is a part of the Bill of Rights set forth in the Amendments of the United States Constitution. It was a part of John Calvin's theological system.

In Geneva he showed his determination to separate Church and State.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike Luther and Zwingli, who freely surrendered the administrative and disciplinary power of the church to the civil authorities, whether princely or republican, Calvin attempted to mark off for the Church a sphere of spiritual jurisdiction distinct from the civil. . . . Spiritual government, in his view, was as necessary to the Church as civil government to the State; and the two jurisdictions, though mutually helpful rather than antagonistic, were quite distinct. . . . In this effort to define the respective limits of Church and civil power, to secure civil co-

15. *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. II, p. 356.

operation while keeping spiritual jurisdiction and liberty inviolate, he stands alone among the Reformers. The forms of procedure set forth in bk. IV ch. X [of Calvin's *Institutes*] are of only secondary importance. The point of his system which is distinctively characteristic of Presbyterianism consists in his determination to keep ecclesiastical discipline in ecclesiastical hands. Such, in brief, are Calvin's ideas of Church government; but he lacked a field in which to test them.<sup>16</sup>

The part that Calvin's system had in establishing the constitutional limitation of civil government so far as religion is concerned has been well presented in the following quotations from George P. Fisher, the foremost Protestant church historian already quoted:

How is it then, that Calvinism is acknowledged, even by its foes, to have promoted powerfully the cause of civil liberty? One reason lies in the boundary line which it drew between Church and State. Calvinism would not surrender the peculiar functions of the Church to the civil authority. Whether the Church, or the Government, should regulate the administration of the Sacrament and admit or reject communicants, was the question which Calvin fought out with the authorities at Geneva. In this feature, Calvinism differed from the relation of the civil rulers to the Church, as established under the auspices of Zwingli, as well as of Luther, and from the Anglican system which originated under Henry VIII. . . . In France, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, wherever Calvinism was planted, it had no scruples about resisting the tyranny of civil rulers. This principle, in the long run, would inevitably conduce to the progress of civil freedom. . . .

A second reason why Calvinism has been favorable to civil liberty, is found in the republican character of its church organization. Laymen shared power with ministers. The people, the body of the congregation, took an active and responsible part in the choice of the clergy, and of all other officers. . . .

16. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X, p. 249.

Men who were accustomed to rule themselves in the Church, would claim the same privilege in the commonwealth.

Another source of the influence of Calvinism, in advancing the cause of civil liberty, has been derived from its theology. The sense of exaltation of the Almighty Ruler, and of his intimate connection with the minutest incidents and obligations of human life, which is fostered by this theology, dwarfs all earthly potentates. . . . The Calvinist . . . dispenses with a human priesthood, which has not only often proved a powerful direct auxiliary to temporal rulers, but has educated the sentiments to a habit of subjection, which renders submission to such rulers more facile, and less easy to shake off.<sup>17</sup>

Calvin resisted the doctrine that the Church is to be absorbed in the State. He taught that the officers of the Church should be chosen by the congregation.

. . . The two classes of officers at Geneva were elders and deacons. He first established the eldership in full vigor, committing the regulation of doctrine and discipline to a body of clerical and lay pastors, there being twice as many laymen as ministers on the board.<sup>18</sup>

These conclusions are confirmed in the independent researches of professors of history in our universities. Professor Williston Walker, of Yale University, has written:

The influence of Calvinism, for more than a century after the death of the Genevan reformer, was the most potent force in western Europe in the development of civil liberty. What the modern world owes to it is almost incalculable.<sup>19</sup>

In his biography of Calvin, Albert Hyma, professor of history at the University of Michigan, wrote as follows:

The first direct result of Calvin's remarkable view on limited government is seen in the declaration of independence issued in 1681 by the Calvinistic representatives of the Dutch people. This document, so

17. Fisher, *History of the Reformation*, pp. 239-40.

18. Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 417-18.

19. Walker, *John Calvin*, p. 403.

testified two editors in the United States, "first in modern times brings forward prominently the great idea that rulers are responsible to the people and can be deposed by them. The growth of this idea is the center of the development of constitutional and republican government." Half a century later the Puritans in England began their revolt against Stuart absolutism.<sup>20</sup>

M. DeTocqueville, an impartial French observer and a Roman Catholic, also expressed the same conclusions as American writers when he wrote:

The greatest part of British America was peopled by men who, after having shaken off the authority of the pope, acknowledged no other religious supremacy; they brought with them into the New World a form of Christianity, which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion. This contributed powerfully to the establishment of a democracy and republic.<sup>21</sup>

Thus was established the unwavering acceptance of the spiritual fact of the sacredness, inviolability and responsibility of individual human personality, so far as civil government in America was concerned. From it have evolved the civil liberty and form of government, and under it has flourished the economic system, which are characteristic of the American way of life.

As appendixes may be added the chapters of secular philosophers theorizing as to their nature, function, and limitations. The foregoing ecclesiastical facts, motivating tenets, and high objectives, which are often regarded as out of bounds for scientific research, establish the origin of the conceptions, the dynamics which propelled them, and the form of things which have come to be unique in the American system.<sup>22</sup>

20. Hyma, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

21. DeToqueville, *Democracy in America* (1877), p. 328.

22. As an example of a secular philosopher undertaking to explain the establishment of democracy in America reference may be made to the extensive work of Ralph Barton Perry, professor of

Harvard University, in *Puritanism and Democracy* (*The VanGuard Press*, New York, 1944). He asserts that "the Enlightenment [a school of philosophy] constituted the spiritual environment of American democracy in the period of its gestation, birth and childhood . . . the spirit of the Renaissance . . . was in the air men breathed, and had penetrated into the strongholds of religion, morals, and politics" (p. 148). He refers to the work of John Locke as "the classic embodiment and most important source of the so-called Enlightenment" (p. 147).

However, he does not establish that Locke's philosophy was current among the colonists and he records facts which show that Locke himself got his philosophy from Calvinism, which long antedated the philosophical era of the so-called Enlightenment, in the following passages: "If John Locke was the father of modern democracy, he was nonetheless a descendant of Calvin. 'Through direct and indirect influences, both orthodox and liberal, Locke became,' as a recent writer has expressed it, 'a "carrier" of Calvinism from the Reformation to the revolutions of 1688 and 1776.' He came of Puritan stock; his early surroundings and his schooling were dominated by Puritan influences. . . . Louis du Moulin, Camden professor of history, whose lectures he attended [at Oxford], was a Dutch Huguenot (Presbyterian). Ten later years of Locke's life were spent in France and in Holland in a Calvinistic environment. . . . When Puritan and other Calvinistic clergy of the Colonies turned in the eighteenth century to Grotius, Milton, Sidney, Burlamaqui, and Locke, they were citing not only accepted authorities in political philosophy, but men of their own religious creed" (pp. 197-98).

Perry, perhaps more candid than most secular philosophers in this field, records the fact that this philosophy (of the Enlightenment) "was not widespread in America until after the arrival of John Witherspoon at Princeton in 1768" (p. 656). Thus it appears that the spirit of democracy and independence, already well established at that time in the colonies, came from the Reformed theology and the practice of self-government of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, which had been long a part of the life of the colonies, and not from any secular philosophy whatsoever, which was known to some of the leaders but was not, as such, a motivating influence among the people generally.

"Through the habit of identifying Calvinism with its excesses posterity has lost sight of the close and continuous association between Calvinism and the ideas which constitute the basic creed of democracy" (p. 197).

The philosophy of the Enlightenment, so far as establishment of democracy in America is concerned, was theorizing *ex post facto*.

## IV

### *DIVINE APPROVAL OF REPUBLICAN FORM OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT*

"The powers that be are ordained of God," Romans 13:1. This statement of the apostle Paul was written during the reign of Nero, the Roman emperor of monstrous cruelty and wickedness. From the context it is evident that what Paul enunciated was that the institution of civil government is divinely ordained. It is God's will that there be human government. Whoever may be in power as an officer of government is "the minister of God to thee for good," Romans 13:4.

"The form is human, but the authority divine; and though each particular country may have its own laws and constitutions, yet these, in all nations, are binding according to a general rule, be the established form of government what it may."<sup>1</sup> It is the most common interpretation that "the Bible, however, does not teach that there is any one form of civil government which is always and everywhere obligatory. The form of government is determined by the providence of God and the will of the people."<sup>2</sup>

The standard modern view is that the Scriptures do not prescribe any particular form of civil government and do not condemn absolutely any particular form. However, God's displeasure was expressed when the Israelites desired a king to rule over them like the nations around them, I Samuel 8:9, but it is not to be understood that

1. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on I Pet. 2:13-14.*

2. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, p. 357.

God by that disapproval indicated that He is always displeased with the monarchial form. His expressed desire that the Israelites not have that form of government at that stage of their history shows at least His temporary disapproval. There is no record of His disapproval, either temporary or permanent, of any forms of self-government.

If it be accepted that the Scriptures do not prescribe or standardize a particular form for divinely approved civil government, still the historical fact is that modern self-government was derived by its founders from Biblical sources. As shown in former chapters, it was evolved by them from the church polity practiced by the early American colonists which was believed by them to have been divinely ordained as the only form for the church.

If the founders' understanding that there is a divine prescription for the form of church government be accepted, then we have the expressed preference of God as to the form for human government in one sphere at least, namely, in the church. And by analogy it can be inferred that He would approve or prefer the same form for civil government.

That divinely approved form for church government they understood to be the representative (presbyterian) form and they set up the same for their civil government. As an incident, the principle of the sacredness and inviolability of individual human personality accompanies and permeates our form of government.

It is in this situation pertinent to briefly investigate why John Calvin (whose doctrines the colonists followed) arrived at the conviction that the representative form of church government was divinely ordained. He held the Scriptures to be divinely inspired and, as he did for God's plans for other things, he looked primarily to them for evidence of the divine plan for church polity.

In the only two instances where the New Testament is specific as to method the democratic process was used.

One of these was the choice of a successor of Judas as an apostle, Acts 1:15-26. The other was the election of elders (or deacons, as perhaps they are most often designated, although the word deacon is not found in the book of Acts), Acts 6:2-6.

Since no other method is definitely shown anywhere in the New Testament in choosing church officers<sup>3</sup> that would have been enough in Calvin's mind to settle the matter. However, the context of various portions of Scripture confirmed such a conclusion.

For example, the term "bishop," used in Calvin's day to designate a church official exercising monarchial or hierarchical powers or functions in the church, has no such connotation in the Scriptures. There the word is concededly used interchangeably with the word "elder" and therefore furnishes no necessary inference of a form of polity other than democratic.

In scriptural phraseology, these terms [bishop and elder] are applied to one class of office-bearers. Paul sent for the *elders* of Ephesus, and he exhorted them "to take heed to all the flock of which the Holy Ghost had made them 'overseers,'" Acts xx.28. Thus the identical persons were called elders and bishops. The apostle also, after instructing Titus as to qualifications needed by *elders*, adds, "For a *bishop* must be blameless," Titus i.7. The term elder, used in the first instance, is immediately exchanged for the term bishop, while the same office-bearer is described.<sup>4</sup>

With the sanction and under the guidance of the Apostles, officers called elders and deacons were appointed in every newly-formed church, Phil. i.1. They

3. "For proof that their church polity is apostolic Presbyterians are accustomed to appeal to the New Testament and to the time when the apostles were still living; and for proof of the apostolicity of prelacy Episcopalianists appeal rather to the early church fathers and to a time when the last of the apostles had just passed away" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, [11th ed.], Vol. XXII, p. 285).

4. David King, *The Ruling Eldership of the Christian Church*, p. 14.

were elected by the people, and ordained or set apart for their sacred work by the Apostles, Acts vi.2-6. The elders were appointed to teach and rule, I Tim. v.17; Titus i.9; the deacons to minister to the poor, Acts vi.1,2. There were elders in the church at Jerusalem, Acts xi.29, xv.2, 4, 6, xvi.4, and in the church at Ephesus, Acts xx.17; Paul and Barnabus appointed elders in the cities of Lycaonia and Pisidia, Acts xiv.23; Paul left Titus in Crete to appoint elders in every city, Titus i.5; the elders amongst the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia and Bithynia received a special exhortation by Peter, I Peter v.1. These elders were rulers, and the only rulers in the New Testament Church. . . . The elder was a bishop. The two titles are applied to the same persons. See Acts xx.17, 28; 'he sent and called for the *elders* of the church. . . . Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops.' See also Titus i.5,6; 'ordain *elders* . . . for a *bishop* must be blameless.' This is now admitted by modern expositors. (See Bishop Lightfoot's exhaustive essay in his volume on the Epistle to the Phillipians.) The elders were chosen by the people. This is not expressly stated in the New Testament but is regarded as a necessary inference. When an apostle was about to be chosen as successor to Judas, the people were invited to take part in the election, Acts i.15-26; and when deacons were about to be appointed the Apostles asked the people to make the choice, Acts vi.2-6. It is inferred that elders were similarly chosen.<sup>5</sup>

In the second stage (between 60 and 100) . . . the officials were called by two names, "elders" and "bishops," the former denoting the office, the latter the function (exercising oversight). The substantial identity of the two titles cannot be doubted in the light of such passages as Acts xx.17, 28; I Pet. v.1,2; I Tim. iii.1-7, v.17-19 and Titus i.5-7"<sup>6</sup>

The Presbyterian polity, it is maintained, finds clear warrant in the Holy Scriptures. Divine in its origin, one of its chief lesser sources was the Jewish

5. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), Vol. XXII, pp. 283-84.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

ecclesiastical system of the time of Christ, excluding the priestly element. In that system the people were associated together in synagogues or congregations for worship and godly living, and were governed by bodies of men called elders. Acts xiii:15. . . . The elders also constituted the bodies called the local sanhedrins, which exercised judicial functions within limited districts; while the control of the affairs of the church-state as a whole was vested in a council composed of priests, elders, and scribes, designated as the Great Sanhedrin. Under this Jewish system our Lord lived. One of the first acts of his ministry was performed in the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke iv:16, and the authority of the synagogue was recognized by him, Matt. xviii:17, in the command "Tell it unto the church." The general features of the Jewish system were, it is believed, adopted by the primitive Christian church, modified in matters of detail by apostolic authority. The elders of the synagogue became the elders of the Christian congregation, Acts xiv:23; the chief ruler of the synagogue was probably reproduced in the *episcopos* or parochial bishop; the local sanhedrin was modified and established as the presbytery; and the Great Sanhedrin was the prototype of synods, general assemblies and councils.<sup>7</sup> The New Testament presbyter was a ruler in the local congregation, and was chosen to office by the people, Acts xiv:23. In each congregation a number of elders were associated together as a court of control and exercised authority, not as individuals, but as an organized body, Acts xx:17-28.<sup>8</sup>

That the polity of the church was not to be purely democratic but rather representative is understood by Presbyterians to be also demonstrated in the Scriptures by facts set forth as to the method used by the apostles themselves. It was not the practice to submit all questions to the general membership of the local congregation for

7. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IX, p. 240.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.

vote, nor even to the governing body of the local congregation for final decision. Some questions or actions of government were submitted to meetings of representatives of various congregations of a district acting as a council, synod, or presbytery.

Such was the method used by the church at Antioch as to the matter of circumcision. For this representatives of the congregation were sent from Antioch to a council in Jerusalem (similar to a modern presbytery).

And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria. . . . And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter, Acts 15: 3, 4, 6.

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem, Acts 16:4.

One commentator remarks: "In forming this determination [to send representatives to a council at Jerusalem], they seem, as usual, to have been guided by the custom which had prevailed in the Jewish church; viz. (and so Grot.) when any question arose among the Jews, which gave occasion for schism, of appealing to the Sanhedrin to decide the controversy."<sup>9</sup>

Matthew Henry comments: "We have here a council called. . . . They did not give their judgment *separately* but came together to do it."<sup>10</sup>

On the way back to Antioch from the council at Jerusalem, "they delivered them copies of the decrees of the Jerusalem synod to direct them."<sup>11</sup>

"The Scriptural warrant for the presbytery is found in

9. Bloomfield, quoted in *Comprehensive Commentary*, Vol. IV, p. 81.

10. *Commentary*, on Acts 15:6-21.

11. *Ibid.*, on Acts 16:4.

such passages as I Tim. iv:14, and for the synod and general assembly in Acts xv:22-24 and xvi:4.”<sup>12</sup>

The conclusion that representative self-government was approved for the church is inferentially supported by the action of Jesus as recorded in the Scriptures. He attended the synagogues regularly (“as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day,” Luke 4:16). He participated in their worship (“stood up for to read,” Luke 4:16). “And he taught in their synagogues,” Luke 4:15. No criticism by Him is recorded as to their manner of government.

Evidently the polity in use in the Jewish synagogues of Jesus’ day was approved of God and the early Christian Church adopted it with elimination only of the function of the priests of the temple at Jerusalem.

“The services of the synagogue (as distinguished from the temple) required no sons of Aaron.”<sup>13</sup>

The priestly function in Christian churches was omitted because Jesus came as the fulfillment of all that the priestly office symbolized and He became henceforth the sole Priest of His followers who through Him had access to God and who by acceptance of Him had His supreme sacrifice credited to their account.<sup>14</sup> Many historians have alluded to this fact that early Christian practice in

12. *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IX, p. 24.

13. Smith, *Bible Dictionary*, Vol. IV, p. 3135.

14. “When Christ appeared as a high priest . . . then . . . he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. Hebrews ix:11-12. . . . Christ our only priest, this follows from the nature and design of the office. No man, save the Lord Jesus Christ, has liberty of access unto God. . . . No priestly function is ever attributed [in Scripture] to Christian ministers. They do not mediate between God and man” (Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 466-67). “The Aaronic priesthood and sacrifices were, therefore, temporary, being the mere types and shadows of the true priest and the real sacrifice promised from the beginning” (*ibid.*, p. 497).

church government was patterned after the practice of contemporary Jewish synagogues.

The synagogues naturally served as a model in the organization of churches. They are even called by that name in the Epistle of James. James ii:2 Revised Version. . . . Luke gives no account of the institution of the eldership, perhaps because this same office was a well-known feature in the Jewish synagogues. In the church, as in the synagogue, the elders or presbyters were equal in rank, although one of the "rulers of the synagogue" among the Jews may have sometimes acted as president of the board.<sup>15</sup> Tradition traces a synagogue to King Jehoiachin of Judah, who, borne captive to Babylonia with his people, founded such a place of assembly at Shafjatib.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest mention of synagogues is in Ps. lxxiv:8, which may belong to the period of Artaxerxes III . . . the expression used in that passage can hardly be understood of anything else than of houses of assembling for divine worship, and with this agrees Acts xv:21. Josephus mentions synagogues seldom and only casually."<sup>17</sup>

The word synagogue is merely the Greek translation of the Hebrew word meaning "the house of meeting."<sup>18</sup> "At the time of Christ and the apostles there was at least one synagogue in each city of any size in Palestine (at Capernaum, Mark i:21; Nazareth, Mark vi:2). In Jerusalem at least the more important, if not all, divisions of the city, had their own synagogues."<sup>19</sup> "There was one in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii:14), Iconium (*ib. xiv:1*), Thessalonica (*ib. xvii:17*), Berea (*ib. xvii:10*), Athens (*ib. xvii:17*), Corinth (*ib. xviii:4*), Ephesus (*ib. xviii:19*); there were several in Damascus (*ib. ix:2, 20*), Sa-

15. Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 35-36.

16. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVI, p. 109.

17. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. XI, p. 213.

18. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVI, p. 109.

19. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. XI, p. 213.

lamis in Cyprus (*ib.* xiii:5), Alexandria (Philo, *Opera*, ed. Mangey, ii: 565), Rome (*ib.* ii:568-569) and certainly in Antioch in Syria, since the one which Josephus mentions (*War*, VIII; III:3) was the chief synagogue.”<sup>20</sup>

The administration [of the synagogue] was under control of the religious community, which in Palestine coincided with the political body (non-Jews having no participation in either), and was under the control of elders.<sup>21</sup>

Probably the recognition and appointment of elders [in the Christian Church] was simply the transfer from the synagogue to the Church of a usage which was regarded as essential among the Jews; and the Gentile churches naturally followed the example of the Jewish Christians (Acts xiv.23). The elders thus chosen by the people and inducted to their office by the Apostles acted as a church court.<sup>22</sup>

There were “elders in Israel” as early as the time of Moses, Exod. 3:16, 4:29. “Calvin thus revived, under a peculiar form, the eldership in the church. It had existed, to be sure, in some of the Zwinglian churches, but not as an effective organization.”<sup>23</sup> He found nothing in the history of the Jews at the time of Christ or long before that, nor in the practice of the early Christian churches during the lives of the apostles to support the episcopal polity prevalent in his day. He looked primarily to the Scriptures for his authority in everything and he found there specific examples of the representative form he undertook to establish.

Calvin not only found in the Scriptures authority for his type of church government but also ground for limitation of the powers of civil government in the sphere of the spiritual life of individuals. There is the example of Daniel in the Old Testament.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

22. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), Vol. XXII, p. 284.

23. Fisher, *History of the Reformation*, p. 218.

All the presidents of the kingdom . . . have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions (Dan. 6:7).

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before God, as he did aforetime (Dan. 6:10), and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions (Dan. 6:16).

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions (Dan. 6:19).

Then said Daniel unto the king, O, king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocence was found in me, and also before thee, O King, have I done no hurt (Dan. 6:22).

So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God (Dan. 6:23).

In the New Testament we have the examples of the apostles Peter and John.

They called them, and commanded them not to speak . . . in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye (Acts 4:18-19). We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

"No human authority can make it obligatory on a man to disobey God. If all power is from God, it cannot be legitimate when used against God. This is self-evident. The apostles when forbidden to preach the Gospel, refused to obey. When Daniel refused to bow down to the image which Nebuchadnezzar had made; when early Christians refused to worship idols; and when the Protestant martyrs refused to profess the errors of the Ro-

mish church, they all commended themselves to God, and secured the reverence of all good men.”<sup>24</sup>

By insisting that the powers of government in spiritual matters should be reserved solely to the church, Calvin’s church polity eventually established the principle of separation of church and state and, consciously or unconsciously, thereby laid the basis for the limitations of the power of civil government such as are contained in the American Bill of Rights set forth in the amendments to the constitution. The very nature of his system inevitably led to these results.

His ecclesiastical system and its principles led also to other consequences. According to the teachings of the church in his day the decisions of the church were equally authoritative as the Scriptures. This was later formally enunciated as the doctrine of “infallibility.”<sup>25</sup>

Calvin established a church order which made the Scriptures “the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Thereby he founded a two-laws system, the Scriptures being the supreme law and the formulations of the church government authorities being “subordinate standards.” This two-laws system was in essence a form of constitutional government. Accustomed to such a church polity the founders of the United States government naturally set up a constitutional republic.

It has not been the purpose of this treatise to establish that Presbyterian rather than Episcopal church polity has a Scriptural basis and is the Divinely ordained form. The attempt has been to trace how Presbyterians arrived at their position. This is relevant because republican

24. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, p. 359.

25. “We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman pontiff when he speaks ex cathedra . . . is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals” (Vatican Council, July 18, 1870; *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. V, p. 489).

government in America was derived from Presbyterian church polity.

The founders' experience in church government was easily transferable to civil government. They set up self-government in both. It must be admitted that their reasoning was consistent when they concluded that if self-government for the church was ordained of God, then God no doubt wanted it also for civil government.<sup>26</sup>

26. "Efforts have been made to show Calvin was favorable to monarchy; but few writers have so freely and copiously denounced historical and contemporary kings for their godless pride and oppression" (John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* [1954], p. 224).

## V

### *TOLERANCE, AN UNFINISHED THEME*

There is no place in the world where the individual has greater freedom of opinion and conduct, protected by long-established government and institutions, than in the United States. In some newer areas man may perhaps seem equally free, but since these areas are of such comparatively recent origin, they can hardly be compared with our country.

It was not so in the United States from the first. Tolerance is one phase of American life the development of which cannot be unqualifiedly credited to Calvinism nor to any other system of thought or belief prevalent among the early colonists. Of course, it has now become buttressed upon the central theme emphasizing individual rights and duties, but it was not originally understood to be required by it.

To the majority of the colonists religion was imperative. Its authority was absolute, final, and allowed of no deviation. They felt it to be their duty not only to obey it themselves but also to enforce upon their community observance of its precepts as they understood them and even to actually exclude from their midst newcomers who did not conform in faith and practice.

The New England character was marked by severe integrity. Conduct was shaped by a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. Private morals were carefully watched by the authorities in church and state. . . . A man was whipped for shooting fowl on Sunday. The swearer was made to meditate over his sin, standing in a public place with his tongue in a cleft stick; sometimes he was fined twelve pence, or

set in the stocks, or imprisoned, "according to the nature and quality of the person." In exaggerated offenses the unruly member was bored through with a hot iron. Minor transgressions of the tongue were not winked at, and the unhappy housewife, whose temper got the better of her wisdom, had sorry leisure for repentance.<sup>1</sup>

On May 18, 1631, the Massachusetts General Court reached the momentous decision that: "Noe man shalbe admitted to the freedom of this body politche but such as are members of some of the churches within the limits of the same." . . . Massachusetts intolerance was one of the principal reasons for the formation of the other New England colonies.<sup>2</sup>

According to the regulations of 1632, in Virginia "absence from [church] service 'without allowable excuse' was punished with a fine of a pound of tobacco, and if the absence continued a month, with fifty pounds."<sup>3</sup>

These quotations make it evident that "the Established Church of England was guarded with as jealous strictness in the South as were Puritan principles in the North."<sup>4</sup>

In believing in strictness in religion, the colonists were on sure footing. If it is *religion* (eternal truth divinely revealed), then it is obligatory and unchangeable and must be followed precisely.

Unwavering dominance is an inherent characteristic of Divine truth. When Divine truth has been determined there is no freedom of action on the part of the believer. Its requirements must be strictly enforced by him—upon himself.

This is the point where the colonists erred. They felt

1. Barnes, *Popular History of the United States* (Steele), Vol. I, pp. 89-90.

2. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, pp. 88-89.

3. Barnes, *ibid.*, p. 111.

4. *Ibid.*

entitled, even required, to enforce this strict obedience on others. They applied this enforcement not only to their fellow communicants but to everyone. As those of differing faith came among them they at once took steps to eliminate what they regarded as false religious beliefs. This involved fines, imprisonment, banishment and other near-barbarous punishments, such as whipping, cutting off ears, placing in the stocks, etc., for those who did not observe their religious duties as the colonists (especially the Puritans) conceived them.

They applied this strictness not only to matters of general conduct involving morals but also to specific religious requirements such as church attendance and partaking of the sacraments, and even to matters of belief not involving conduct. They punished any deviation from their theological tenets.

They had come to America to seek religious freedom — for themselves. They did not conceive it to be practical or required by their religion to allow others of differing tenets to have similar freedom. They were right in being strict in religion — with themselves, but they unconsciously transgressed the fundamental tenet of their own faith by compelling compliance with their conceptions of religious duties on the part of others. This was intolerance.

This intolerance of Plymouth colony is illustrated by the following case. Roger Williams, a teacher of religion at Salem and later a church teacher at Plymouth, advocated that the civil authorities had no right to punish blasphemy, perjury, and Sabbath-breaking.

He affirmed that the power of the magistrate "extends only to the bodies and goods and outward estate of man" and that "no spiritual power in matters of worship can ever be conferred [on magistrates], since conscience belongs to the individual."<sup>5</sup> (Involved with these conten-

5. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 295.

tions was his insistence that the land of the colony belonged to the Indians.)

He was ordered deported to England but escaped into the forest and found refuge among Indians.<sup>6</sup> He later founded a colony at Providence with full religious freedom, where men of all faiths or no faith had equal rights. This became eventually the type for all America but it was at first regarded by the Puritans of Massachusetts as inconceivable from a practical standpoint.<sup>7</sup>

Twenty years after the Roger Williams incident, the Quakers were persecuted in Massachusetts Bay colony. They were "fined, whipped, imprisoned and sent out of the colony."<sup>8</sup> In fact, not only this colony but others (except Rhode Island) placed various restrictions by civil law upon the exercise of religion, including in some of them the establishment of certain churches.

Roger Williams was, of course, a "strict Calvinist"<sup>9</sup> but in his conception of the right of individual religious liberty he was divergent from the conventional Calvinism of his day as it was everywhere found. He was unique in becoming the early champion of this enlightened application of Reformed polity.

Roger Williams was the first to organize and build up a political community with absolute religious liberty as its chief cornerstone. To him, the successful pioneer of these principles, is due to a larger extent than to any man, the American system of a "free church in a free state."<sup>10</sup>

From Constantine to Williams, the Christian Church always and everywhere in Christendom, dominated the State.<sup>11</sup>

6. Steele, *A Brief History of the United States*, pp. 56-57.

7. Thompson, *A History of the People of the United States*, p. 57.

8. Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

9. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, p. 129.

10. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XXIX, p. 344.

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 469.

So far as Williams was concerned his endorsement of the principle of tolerance was, no doubt, in part an out-growth of his conviction that civil government has no jurisdiction over matters of conscience; but it was also a practical necessity. Being in a minority, he could not have an opportunity of living by his convictions without tolerance on the part of the majority.

When he founded a colony he made this principle a corner-stone. He later modified or compromised it to some extent but on the whole he was consistent in his application of it to his constituency.

Minority groups, like the Baptists, of whom Roger Williams is often regarded as one, became staunch supporters of religious liberty. The Baptists practically made guarantee of freedom of religion a condition of their co-operation in the Revolutionary War.

If these things are granted they pledge themselves to unite with their brethren and to the utmost of their ability promote the common cause.<sup>12</sup>

Even the Presbyterians, who had supported the war for Independence so unreservedly and who had had major influence in formulating the Constitution, had reservation about adopting the Constitution because, as written, it did not expressly foreclose the possibility of established churches in the several states. They demanded that a Bill of Rights be added to guarantee that the government could not infringe upon religious liberty.<sup>13</sup>

The leading powers of Europe had always considered such a church [a state church] indispensable to their existence; the founders of the American Republic were the first to create a government entirely independent of any creed or form of worship.<sup>14</sup>

12. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture 1765-1840*, p. 36.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

14. Montgomery, *Student's American History*, pp. 221-22.

There were originally several intolerant communities, some distances from each other. When they expanded and contact was established among them, exclusiveness became impractical. When they finally united they faced the problem whether to make religious practices uniform. Uniformity confronted them as impossible, especially since no church was in a majority. Even martyrdom would be preferred by some of each group rather than conformity to what their group regarded as the false tenets and practices of others.

When people come upon an immovable object, their only course is to adjust their existence to it. That became the course of the colonists as to religious differences, and tolerance thereby became a distinctive feature of American life. The fact that at the time no one church group was in a majority facilitated the solution, which otherwise would have involved a prolonged process.

The fact that all groups were in a minority and thus were largely forced to the establishment of the principle of religious tolerance instead of its having been an original ideal or principle of their life and faith perhaps depreciates their credit somewhat.

This fact has been expressed in a somewhat philosophical formula by Professor Garrison as follows:

Tolerance has often been the special virtue of minorities, if that can be considered a virtue, which is a method of getting something rather than a motive for giving something.<sup>15</sup>

A similar statement has been made by Professor Ralph Barton Perry of Harvard University in the following passage:

The first and in the long run the strongest force for religious tolerance is the desire *to be tolerated* felt by members of a sect zealously devoted to their own peculiar creed, but doomed inescapably to live

15. Winfred Ernest Garrison, *Intolerance*, p. 15.

within a society which they cannot control. Abandoning hope of imposing their creed on their neighbors, they demand a sphere of liberty within which they can profess and practice it themselves. In order to secure this privilege they are willing to concede a like privilege to others, and to abandon the idea of religious uniformity.<sup>16</sup>

Even John Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrims before their embarkation from Holland, understood this fact of human nature.

John Robinson . . . shrewdly comments on the difference in sentiment respecting toleration, which is felt by the adherents of a creed when they are in power, from that which they feel when they form an oppressed minority.<sup>17</sup>

Voltaire, the French philosopher, has recognized the same fact as shown by the following quotation:

"If there had been in England only one religion," said Voltaire, "its despotism would have been fearful. If there had been two religions, they would have cut each other's throat. But as there are thirty they live peacefully and happily."<sup>18</sup>

An illustration of this principle at work in our history long before our independence is found in the action of English authorities when taking over New Amsterdam from the Dutch.

The toleration of all Protestant bodies inaugurated under the new regulations [by the English] was unusual for the seventeenth century, but the great variety of religious groups which the English found in New Netherland helps to explain the necessity for this liberality.<sup>19</sup>

That the unique conditions in the colonies made necessary the principle of religious tolerance which notably

16. Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy*, p. 346.

17. *Works of Robinson*, (Boston, 1851), i, 40, cited in Fisher, *History of the Reformation*, p. 507.

18. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

19. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America*, p. 36.

characterizes American institutions is well expressed in the following quotations:

In view of the religious diversity of the population of the American federal state, no other arrangement was possible. For the first time in human history there came into existence a nation which, from the moment of its birth, was composed of religious minorities.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the Christian centuries it has been the minority groups that have been the advocates of religious liberty. . . . Being minorities they do not possess the power to express their intolerance in violent programs of persecution or in denial of political and religious rights to others. Outside New England and Virginia none of the colonies ever possessed majority religious bodies, so that the minority attitude toward religious toleration and the relation of Church and State came to be the prevailing colonial attitude. In the American colonies, for the first time in the history of Christendom, there had come to be a group of civil States in which there was no majority religion.<sup>21</sup>

The struggle for tolerance in religion, so far as the civil government is concerned, has been largely finished in the United States. However, in our personal relationships there is still a large measure of the intolerant spirit. In colonial times this spirit possessed members of Protestant groups toward other Protestant groups, as well as toward non-Protestant groups. Today it is not so evident among Protestant groups. It is more pronounced among Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish groups toward each other.

The American people are possessed of a considerable spirit of race prejudice. This exists between the white and colored races particularly, and similarly between those of Occidental and those of Oriental lineage. It seems evident that the principle of the sacredness of human

20. Garrison, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

21. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

personality, of the inviolability of individual personality, and especially the tenet of human brotherhood and the challenge of the Golden Rule, must bring us to a more advanced state of tolerance when these fundamentals shall have done their more complete work.

It is to be noted that the government of the United States is not an absolute democracy. We often say that we believe in the rule of the majority, but it is not wholly true. We have firmly established in the American way that there are certain areas of life over which the civil government has no jurisdiction whatsoever. This idea made necessary the adoption of the Bill of Rights which is set forth in the Amendments of the Constitution. This Bill established not only freedom of religion but also freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly. It guarantees against imprisonment without trial by jury of a cross-section of the citizenry and against taking of private property for public use without due process of law and just compensation, and confirms other fundamental human rights.

At present there is a strong feeling in the United States against Communists, and stern governmental measures are taken against them. This is not intolerance, as it is justifiable on the principle of self-defense on the part of the government, because a constituent of Communism is the purpose of overturning the government by force, a process inconsistent with the fundamental concepts of the American system. It is a coincidence that the general support by the American people of measures against Communism is the more gladly given because materialism and atheism are also constituents of Communism.

The present justified situation with reference to Communism is an illustration which helps us to understand the unjustified feeling and action of government and people in the colonies against religions other than the

religion of the majority in the few colonies where there was a majority religion. By contemplating this situation with reference to Communism the present generation can conceive what might now be the situation with reference to every religion and race other than those of the majority of the voting population if safeguards had not been thrown up against it.

Human nature has not changed. Even the most "advanced" religionists concede that there has not been any perceptible change in it within the period of recorded history.

Their hopes and fears, temptations, motives, and desires, loves, hates, griefs, struggles, defeats and victories, it is all alike a thousand years before Christ or two thousand after. . . . As Dr. Moffatt says, "The alterations of civilization leave the heart of vital religion untouched as nothing else."<sup>22</sup>

"It could happen here," except for our heritage of the American way vouchsafed by the guarantee of our constitutional system, which require our "eternal vigilance." The principal constituent of that way is made up of the basic tenets of Reformed theology, the right of private judgment with individual responsibility and the right of self-government, resulting in the recognition of the sacredness and inviolability of individual human personality. These have been, consciously or unconsciously, embedded in our laws, institutions, and manner of life and thought. This is our best protection, the only absolute imperative, in the American way.

Not only is religion the sole sure basis for morality but it is also the only unwavering bulwark of our "unalienable" freedoms.

22. Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, pp. 56-57.

## VI

### *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE DEFINES RELIGIOUS LIBERTY*

Across the years of recorded history until the nineteenth century, always and everywhere in Western civilization, religious liberty had been limited. Even its practicality was doubted until the American experiment demonstrated otherwise.

It had been the almost uniform policy for states to establish religions, conformity to the establishments being required in varying degrees, including adherence in order to qualify for public office, and contributions to their support by taxation.

It is hardly more than a century ago that it was finally conceded by the governing power that religion is not a state but a purely personal affair. Even at the present time this is not conceded in all countries. From time immemorial the state has had its religion as by law established, the idea being that the safety and welfare of the state depended upon the proper performance of the state religion. To protest and refuse to perform these religious rites was to become a disorderly and possibly revolutionary element within the state.<sup>1</sup>

Neither may the state control religion, nor religion control the state. It is inevitable and appropriate that the moral principles of religion effectively establish the ethical standards of legislation, of administration of justice, and of order in the community. This is because self-government reflects the dominant philosophy of its constitu-

1. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVII, p. 312.

ency, subject to the limitation that basic freedoms of spirit and conduct of the minority must not be infringed. This is entirely in accordance with the modern principle of separation of church and state.

Not until the development of the American system was anything approaching a standard for religious liberty known and it is still largely in an unwritten state even in the United States. Or perhaps it should be said that large areas of the relationship between church and state still depend for definition upon the interpretation by judges of brief statements of principle found in national and state constitutions.

For example: To what extent may religion be taught in our public schools? May public school pupils be given release during school time to be taught religion in churches or elsewhere? May school credits be given pupils for progress in such education? May public revenues be used to subsidize parochial schools on the theory that such schools perform part of the function for which public schools have been established (thereby relieving the public school system)? May pupils of parochial schools be carried in public school buses between homes and schools? May the Bible or other religious texts be read by teachers in public schools, etc.? Final answers to many such questions cannot yet be given.

The constitutional provisions upon which the courts develop most of the principles defining religious liberty are the following (from the United States Constitution with examples from one state constitution):

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof (United States Constitution, Amendment I).

No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States (United States Constitution, Article VI).

The General Assembly shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; nor shall any person be com-

elled to attend any place of worship, pay tithes, taxes, or other rates for building or repairing places of worship, or the maintenance of any minister, or ministry (Constitution of the State of Iowa, Article I, Section 3).

No religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office, or public trust, and no person shall be deprived of any of his rights, privileges, or capacities, or disqualified from the performance of any of his public or private duties, or rendered incompetent to give evidence in any court of law or equity, in consequence of his opinions on the subject of religion (Constitution of the State of Iowa, Article I, Section 4).

Under these provisions religious liberty has been established and is being thus far preserved in the United States although their full application has been quite gradual.<sup>2</sup> But when similar provisions have been tried in other countries much has been done by their public officials to interpret them in ways that circumscribe religious liberty, chiseling away its substance. For example, in Spain, where the Roman Catholic Church is the established religion and where the laws are claimed to give religious liberty, the government officials construe religious liberty as allowing worship in homes and in Protestant church buildings but not in other public places, and solicitation by non-Catholics to accept the Protestant faith is held to be a violation of the laws establishing the state religion.

Rev. Paul E. Freed of Greensboro, N. C., a Baptist minister in Madrid, Spain, said that the Spanish look on foreign aid to Protestants in Spain with the "greatest distaste." He quoted Luis Maria Lojendio, a spokesman

2. "In the year in which the Constitution was adopted, only three states gave Catholics the right to vote. New Jersey didn't allow Catholics or Jews to hold public office until another fifty-five years had passed. . . . And New Hampshire didn't give Catholics and Jews the right to hold public office until 1867" (Don Whitehead, *The F. B. I. Story*, p. 323).

for the Foreign Ministry, as replying to his appeal for greater tolerance for Protestants in Spain, as follows:

It is an indisputable fact that national public opinion views foreign intervention with greatest distaste, since state intervention confirms what the majority of Spaniards believe: That Protestant propaganda in Spain is an attempt at foreign penetration into the national life, directed with political aims at the destruction of the religious unity which substantially exists in Spain. . . . It is clear they [the Protestants] have no need for the backing and support of foreign religious and political organizations.

Mr. Freed said further that it is not true that Spanish Protestants have sufficient freedom to practice their religion.

The fact that more than thirty chapels in all parts of Spain are now closed by government orders is only one indication of this. Theoretically Spanish Protestants have the right to appeal to government officials and the court — but with what results? Petition after petition on the part of Protestants receive no answer, and if answered it is almost without fail in the negative.

He recalled that four Protestant youths were recently released from a Madrid prison after several weeks' imprisonment for distributing Protestant leaflets in front of a Protestant chapel.<sup>3</sup>

In Italy public officials assume the right to determine whether the establishment of a Protestant congregation at any particular location would be in the public interest and there have been instances where interminable delays in making decisions, as well as adverse decisions, have prevented the establishment of Protestant churches. In Peru, as well as in Spain and Italy and elsewhere, there has been no adequate protection against persecution of Protestants by private citizens. In some nations the idea has been advanced that the public organization of a re-

3. *New York Herald-Tribune*, Paris edition, Sept. 24, 1952.

ligion other than the established church is a threat to the unity and peace of the nation, justifying restraint against a threatened breach of the peace. Some countries are limiting the entrance of missionaries from other countries.

These and other limitations on religious liberty present the question to what extent civil government should interfere in the public and private exercise of religious freedom by individuals and groups. Basic principles should be enunciated to govern the decision of this question.

Among such principles must be the right of civil government to self-preservation. Every government must be conceded the natural right to punish treason against itself. This must be allowed enough latitude to include the right to punish subversion threatening its framework or form as a democracy or monarchy or other type of civil government. If religious organizations become active in such purposes it is unrealistic to expect governments to keep hands off.

The primary duty of civil government is to preserve order. For that reason every government must be conceded the power to punish breaches of the peace. This power has two phases. One phase is the prevention of religious organizations from committing breaches of the public peace and the other phase is the prevention of breaches of the public peace prompted by intolerance or bigotry on the part of those outside particular religious groups which would infringe the liberty of such groups. This latter phase of civil power is necessary even to the safeguarding of religious liberty.

Of course, civil government must be conceded the power to punish not only overt acts of treason and subversion against itself and actual breaches of the peace, but also conspiracies to commit such acts. And this may legitimately include punishment of those engaging in propaganda or teaching tending to promote them.

There is generally little need for a civil government to

interfere with religious groups on account of their promotion of immorality, but every civil government must be conceded power to maintain public morals according to the accepted ethical standards of its constituency.

In addition to these powers, civil government must have the power to investigate religious organizations to determine whether subversion, disorder, or immorality are being taught or planned. In fact, it may be argued that government investigation of religious groups is more important to the government than investigation of other groups because religious conviction is the most imperative and can cause the most trouble.

In the present state of affairs there is need for a standard definition of religious liberty as related to civil government. This could most appropriately be undertaken by an international organization because it would affect religious groups in every country and involve international relations.<sup>4</sup> Without pretense that the definition is complete and exact, I suggest that religious lib-

4. The North American Area Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order in 1953 created a Commission on Religious and Civil Liberty. This Commission accumulates data on infringements of religious freedom in the various nations of the world. At its 1955 conference in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the Council adopted a resolution providing for the formulation by that Commission of a set of principles that should govern religious liberty. The Council has a constituency of about 15,000,000 and the background of experience with freedom of religion in the United States and Canada gives it the best possible understanding of religious liberty. No part of its membership in these nations is constrained to compromise its findings because of receiving subsidy or support from public revenues. The findings of the North American commission will no doubt be somewhat in "advance" of what the world Alliance will readily adopt because members in other nations have different status and background. If the world Alliance should adopt the original formulation of the Council great progress in religious liberty throughout the world would be inevitably promoted. The world Alliance of these Presbyterian churches is no doubt the largest family group of Protestant churches in the world if computation is made in all such groups on the same basis. It has a constituency of about 40,000,000.

erty as related to civil government should include the following rights:

To be free to worship any God, and to choose the manner of worship, or not to worship at all;

To worship in private and in public according to the dictates of conscience without molestation;

To assemble with others in public and in private for religious worship and activities;

To solicit, publicly and privately, acceptance of a faith by those of other faiths or of no faith;

To contribute to the maintenance and extension of a faith at home and abroad;

To send and support missionaries of a faith at home and abroad;

To enter foreign countries without limitation or condition because of religious faith or occupation;

To be as individuals members of, and as groups parts of, local, national and international organizations of solely religious nature without restraint or interference;

To be protected in every nation from persecution by individuals, groups, or government because of religious faith;

To acquire, own, and use for religious purposes real estate and other property in every nation without limitation or condition on account of religious faith;

To be free from investigations as to religious faith except as to acts of treason, subversion, immorality, or breach of the peace;

To hold any office or public trust without qualification on account of religious faith;

To establish and maintain schools for religious education of young and old without conditions or requirements as to instructors or as to subject matter of instruction;

To be free from obligation and influence inevitably incident to receiving subsidy or maintenance from civil government;

To be free from the requirement to contribute to the maintenance of established religion by taxation or otherwise;

To have the franchise and all civil privileges without qualification on account of religious faith;

To be governed as to faith, worship, and discipline in spiritual matters and as to ordination and appointment of ministers and officers in religious groups under a polity of their own choice separate from and independent of civil government; and

To have freedom of speech and of the press, radio, television, and all means of communication without limitation or condition on account of religious faith.

Human liberty can in no sphere be defined as synonymous with absolute freedom of the individual. This is simply because of the existence of other individuals. Freedom and equality are both prime considerations. Sometimes freedom must be limited to have equality. The ideal of liberty can be only such freedom as is consistent with an equal freedom on the part of others.

To do what we will, consistently with the interest of the community to which we belong, is civil liberty. . . . The liberty of the individual is augmented by the very laws which restrain it; because he gains more from the limitation of other men's freedom than he suffers by diminution of his own.<sup>5</sup>

Liberty before the civil law should not be modified in any way not required by paramount necessities. Especially should religious liberty not be modified in any way with the purpose of limiting the exercise of religious worship, education, or evangelization, or with the purpose of requiring or inducing change of religious faith.

No man, or class of men, ought on account of religion to be invested with peculiar emoluments or privileges, nor subjected to any penalties or disabilities, unless under color of religion the preservation of equal liberty and the existence of the state are manifestly endangered (Provision of the Bill of Rights of the 1776 Constitution of Virginia proposed by James Madison).

5. William Paley, *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1794), p. 422.

[In colonial America] toleration was not the end sought. Toleration kept alive all sorts of political and other disabilities. In New England a person could not enjoy the franchise unless he were a member of a particular church in good and regular standing. In Europe similar disabilities were laid upon persons who refused to conform to the state's religion. Toleration was as odious as oppression. What was all along demanded was the right to absolute equality of all religions before the law. America led the way to this goal. It was the first and for a long time the only country to write the principle not of toleration but of religious freedom into fundamental laws.<sup>6</sup>

This pure religious liberty may be justly rated as the great gift of America to civilization and the world,<sup>7</sup> the most striking contribution of America to the science of government.<sup>8</sup>

6. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVII, p. 313.

7. Sanford H. Cobb, *The Rise of Religious Liberty in America*, p. 2.

8. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

## VII

### *ALTRUISM IN AMERICAN CULTURE*

American civilization is characterized by benevolent elements which distinguish it among the nations. Other Western nations with similar cultural elements have variant emphases. This makes appropriate the consideration of the source, cause, and extent of the development of institutions and ideologies of altruistic nature in American culture.

The most obvious spheres involving these elements are the relief and care of the less fortunate and the nurture and education of youth, but recent developments have added greatly to the areas in which benevolent functions are exercised in American community life. All of such agencies and activities have in common the quality of concern for those less able, or disinclined, to provide necessary or wholesome services, equipment, or supplies for themselves.

A survey of the history of the human race discloses that until the Christian area there were practically no public institutions providing such general services and care, and where they have been since developed to any substantial extent the initiative has been from the Christian constituencies of the populations.

Of course, individuals in every age have had concern for near relatives and friends in need, although we read of ancient peoples abandoning aged and unfortunate to die of starvation and neglect. But community consciousness of collective responsibility for these eleemosenary functions is distinctive of Christian constituencies, especially of modern Christian constituencies.

The motives which have led people to found and to carry on philanthropic societies are mixed; but from early Hebrew times through the long development of Occidental civilization, religion has been the seed plot in which grew nearly all organizations included in philanthropy.<sup>1</sup>

"If one were to take out everything in moral advance that has had the Christian impetus and objective, there would be a very sorry residue."<sup>2</sup>

Christian missionary activity involves the altruistic element and from the time of the apostles has been continuously carried on by Christians although in all sects the greatest development has come in the last two centuries, especially as to foreign missions. It is no doubt true that responsibility for evangelizing the world under the Great Commission has contributed immeasurably to the development of the concern for others in every human need. In fact, secular altruistic techniques and activities have in recent years been used by evangelizing agencies as an approach to and as part of the missionary endeavor contributing to the direct evangelistic effort.

Even if this reasoning were not wholly valid, the fact still would remain that general community concern for and care of the less fortunate and the youth is a unique distinctive of modern Christian civilization. It has appeared later in other civilizations only in imitation of and as prompted by Christian influence and example.

Confirmatory of this, archaeological excavators are said to have unearthed in ancient ruins no evidences of hospitals for the sick or places for the care of the starving. The most eminent ancient architectural authority (Vitruvius) set forth plans for all kinds of public buildings, but hospitals were not among them. No works of any classical writer before the time of Christ mentions public hospitals. The first such institutions in history

1. Edward C. Jenkins, *Philanthropy in America*, p. 8.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 81, quoting Sir Josiah Stamp.

are Christian foundations.<sup>3</sup> In fact, "the church is really the first organized charity."

The development of public care for the poor, hospitals for the sick, and orphanages for children without parents has been more extensive in the United States than elsewhere in the world. This was originally under church or other distinctively Christian auspices.<sup>4</sup> It is being gradually taken over by civil authority and supported by public taxation supplemented by private benevolences.<sup>5</sup>

Hospitals in the sense of institutions for the care of the ailing poor first occur in history as Christian foundations. Public hospitals are mentioned by no classical writer before the time of Christ, and no trace of one is to be found in the explorations. As Meyer-Steineg points out, Vitruvius, the Roman architectural authority, treats of every kind of public building, but not hospitals.<sup>6</sup>

The treatment of the dependent poor is now accepted as evidence of the civilization of a community. . . . With the advent of the Christian era charity in its broadest interpretation came to mean the exercise of humanity through the spiritual development of doing good, and the Church became a powerful organization in extending charity. Churches of all denominations have always looked after their poor and helpless; the Church is really the first organized charity.<sup>7</sup>

3. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XIV, p. 427.

4. "The present relations of philanthropy and government will become plainer by reference to their position in Colonial America. Then, the Church controlled nearly all of the aspects of life which are included today in philanthropy" (*Edward C. Jenkins, op. cit.*, p. 12).

5. "The American people have apparently decided to expand the services in the field of welfare under the management of governmental officials, municipal, state and Federal, and to bear the increased load of taxation which this policy involves" (*ibid.*, p. 10).

6. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XIV, p. 427.

7. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 307. "The hospital as it exists today is essentially a product of Christianity. Records show that the first organized establishment for the care of the sick was founded by Saint Basil at Caesarea, in Cappadocia, A. D., 369. The hospital, therefore, antedates the university by many centuries" (*The World Book*, Vol. V, p. 2847).

Beyond these original altruistic activities in recent decades there have been promoted agencies for the protection of public morals and for the welfare, even for the enjoyment, of groups, such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, Golden Age clubs and Four-H clubs. Community social centers have been established and programs of adult education have been set up.

These are all fruits of the central motivation of concern for others. Self-interest coincides with this motivation because of the betterment of community conditions and environment, but the development must be credited in the main to Christian altruism. Since Colonial days in America social life has been dominated by religion. The churches have been the principal social centers of American communities.

This is still pre-eminently true at the "grass-roots." In a typical state, Iowa, recently referred to as the state most like Colonial New England of any region in America, for the year 1953 ninety-one country churches received certificates of merit for outstanding rural community service in such activities as 4-H clubs, Scouting, community concert band, summer recreation, craft and other special classes, aid for the needy, and helping young people get established in the community.

The *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* magazine (February 20, 1954), commented editorially on this service as follows: "Rural churches in Iowa make a huge contribution to all that is best in farm life. And certainly these same churches are usually the focal point in community development. . . . Each of these efforts has resulted in a special kind of improvement in the community — an improvement to which church groups are most able to contribute."

Education of youth, including the whole of the Ameri-

can educational system, both public and private, is to be credited to Christian initiative. Originally the church alone directly promoted education. The methods have been variant and at times inadequate but the purpose has been consistent and tenacious.

Since religion was the first of social forces that led to a special organization, it is very natural that it should be the first to see the need of education. . . . The connection between the Church and education is maintained throughout the ages.<sup>8</sup>

The Reformers in general and Calvinists in particular were from the first deeply impressed with the need for popular education, for a democracy must educate its citizens in the interest of sane self-government. . . . The Reformed churchmen were ardent educationists.<sup>9</sup>

In the United States the Congregationalists have been foremost among religious bodies in planting colleges and fostering schools.<sup>10</sup>

That was especially true in the earlier part of our history, no doubt in part due to the fact that they came earlier in larger numbers. Other churches later followed a similar pattern.

No part of the work of the Presbyterian Church does her more honor than her efforts on behalf of education.<sup>11</sup>

During the first half century after adoption of the constitution of the United States about 40 permanent colleges were opened. Of these, three-fourths . . . were established directly by churches or by their ministers and people. The significant fact that half of them were established by Presbyterians is a special challenge to those of us who are Presbyterians today. . . . In 1901 there were still five times as many church-related as tax-supported colleges and their enrollment totaled twice as large. . . . For 1954-

8. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, p. 171.

9. *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 269.

10. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 24.

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 269.

1955 the United States Office of Education listed 721 church-related colleges, of which 469 are Protestant, 247 Catholic, and 5 Jewish (Ralph Waldo Lloyd, *Our Presbyterian Colleges*, p. 3).

The supreme importance of these facts to the ennoblement of leadership in our culture cannot be overemphasized. Ralph Waldo Lloyd, president of Maryville, Tennessee, college and former moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, quotes Lord Macaulay as follows:

Nine-tenths of the calamities that have befallen humanity have no other origin than the union of high intelligence with low desires.

Nothing is so effective in the ennobling of desires as the Christian religion, and this is done principally in the Christian home, the church, and the Christian college. The increasing secularization of higher education in the United States must be counteracted in its effect on future leadership.

The record shows that all of America's first colleges, and a majority of the later ones until the turn of the present century, had their beginnings in the zeal of the churches and their ministers. There are in existence today in this country some 19 colleges and universities that were founded before the American colonies became the United States in 1789. . . . Only 5 of the 19 are now related actively to any church (Ralph Waldo Lloyd, *Our Presbyterian Colleges*, p. 2).

This tragic casualty sustained by Christian higher education is now being aggravated in this "sputnik" age by the great emphasis being put upon the necessity to surpass materialistic Russia in education in the sciences. The effect of this emphasis may lead to a minimization of the greater importance of education in the liberal arts (humanities) and in Christian religion and Christian philosophy. But the greatness of the nation will always depend more upon the right ideals and attitudes of lead-

ers and people toward men and things than upon the techniques of physical science; and the God of history will bless those who conform to His will.

As stated in a quotation above, the necessity for elementary education of the people generally to successful democracy is quite apparent.

Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged (Ordinance of the Northwest Territory 1787).

A constituency must be literate in order to have intelligent self-government. Both education and self-discipline are indispensable. There must be a willingness to forego private advantage if that would be for the greater public benefit.

This is the point at which American democracy is weakest and at which newer democracies are most likely to fail. Too often votes are cast for personal interest or group interest at the sacrifice of public interest. Many are too ready to vote to themselves subsidies, increased pensions, or other distributions from public funds, without regard to the effect of such operations on the whole economy of the country and on the public revenue and monetary system.

The more intelligent the electorate and the more Christian altruism permeates it, the greater success a democracy will have. Both education and evangelism (for its incidental fruit of altruism) are essential to produce such a result.

The writer recently spent some time in India where democracy is a new experiment. While it cannot be pretended that on a short tour in a strange country a person can form any very reliable conclusions, it seemed apparent that most of the governmental problems of that country would be considerably solved if the constituency had literacy and Christianity. Until it has both these the

practice of democracy in its government will be a most difficult undertaking.

The benefit of education to civil government is another instance in which a by-product of religion has been the *sine qua non* of the success of a secular government. The original purpose of public education was not primarily competency for democracy. The paramount purpose was religious — to enable everyone to read the Scriptures and especially to prepare men for the Christian ministry. Nevertheless democratic civil government has depended upon it for permanency and success.

The origin and nature of this altruistic element of American culture seems so evident that a long discussion would be superfluous. The theme of altruism is the most unselfish theme of American life and the most indispensable to the excellencies of our civilization. It not only assures the success of democracy in civil government and makes the life of individuals more tolerable with each other but it also promotes philanthropy and comity between nations as well as between individuals.

Most of the unusual operations of the American government must be largely credited to it. These involve donations of public funds to other nations such as was done in the Marshall Plan and is still being done both through United Nations service agencies and independently.<sup>12</sup> These donations have been and are being acquiesced in and supported by the citizenry as a whole principally because of this altruistic factor in public ideology. In no other way can such enlightened self-interest be fully accounted for.

Mention should also be made of other unique actions of the American government. The United States has actually

12. "Multi-billion-dollar spending abroad after 10 years of a foreign-aid program which has cost the American taxpayer more than 50 billion dollars" (*Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1955). These payments have totaled 63.9 billions from July 1, 1945, to June 30, 1956, according to Commerce Secretary Sinclair Weeks.

voluntarily relinquished territories so that they could become independent nations. These actions are so nearly unprecedented in the history of the world as to be regarded as anomalous. Cuba and the Phillipines would apparently never have been set free by any nation other than the United States. Because of the comparatively overwhelming power of the United States these actions cannot be understood except on the assumption that they were motivated by altruism. Because it is so unusual, such an attitude on the part of a sovereign nation is not accepted without misgivings by other nations, the uniform course of history being inconsistent with it.

It is evident that American experience in Colonial and Revolutionary days, and American commitment to the right of self-determination of peoples implicit in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, could not have brought about these actions without the domination of the type of Christianity which has always prevailed, especially the tenets of Calvinism buttressing the sacredness and inviolability of the human personality and establishing the right of self-government in the church as based upon the sacred Scriptures. This philosophy has not only been applied to the American form of civil government but also to American international relations.

This element of altruism in group ethics is the more remarkable in view of the apparently generally accepted idea that, while conduct based upon unqualified self-interest compromises Christian moral standards in the individual, it has always been lauded even by Christian citizens as a superior factor in the character and action of the government of a sovereign constituency.

Not only is the development of this large factor of altruism in American culture to be credited to the prevalence of the Christian religion among the people of the United States, but the Christian religion also furnishes the principal assurance of its permanence. That is be-

cause religious motives are the most peremptory and unchanging of all human motives.

Religious faith is the most powerful of all motives. This statement is based partly on the fact that religious institutions — churches, synagogues, and others — receive more dollars in annual contributions than do *all other* institutions combined.<sup>13</sup>

The author of the foregoing quotation should also have mentioned, as proof of the power of such motive, the spirit of devotion of many Christians as evidenced by self-denial in human relations, self-sacrificing service, facing of greatest difficulties and dangers and even martyrdom for the cause. No other comparable power of motive is found in human nature.

13. Edward C. Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

## VIII

### *A HALF CENTURY OF CRISIS IN RELIGION*

Religion having been the dominating influence in the establishment of the nation and the principal constituent of its civilization from the beginning, it is important that an appraisal be made of the present status of this inclusive central theme of its life. Our institutions depend upon preservation of religion more than upon any other single factor.

As background for such appraisal the intervening period, the nineteenth century, may well be briefly reviewed. Not only the changes, if any, in tenets, techniques and instrumentalities, but also the spirit of the people in religious matters are relevant in such a review. Intellectual assent is important but, especially in religion, the attitude, the animation, of the individual is of vital significance. The extent of activation and fruitage depends in a surprising degree upon dedication and emotion. Whatever affects dedication and emotion, affects the effectiveness of religion.

The time just prior to the turn of the century was a time of pronounced denominationalism. It has lately been the vogue to deprecate that fact by expressions like: "What a shame that the people of God were so divided!" There were excesses of misdirected zeal which aggravated the disunion. The more recent cooperative spirit which has accompanied the present trend toward ecumenicity is most wholesome. However, it should not be overlooked that nineteenth-century denominationalism was itself an evidence of certain essential unities. The divisions were largely derived from variant interpreta-

tions of the Scriptures which were commonly accepted as the inspired Word of God.

The divisions of the Church into denominations because of such differences as forms of church government and forms of baptism based on variant interpretations of the common standard, for example, now seem to many to have been almost irrelevant, or unreal, disunities. They were actually demonstrations of unity in a transcendently important matter.

The divisions maintained by continuation of denominations transplanted from places of national origin, and especially in the past in part because of language difficulties, must be regarded with a minimum of concern. They have been somewhat justified on the ground of temporary convenience and of sentiment not related to differences in dogma.

Besides these denominational divisions, other major differences developed within the denominations in the nineteenth century, although not yet to the extent of a crisis. There were those who were questioning the integrity and authority of the Bible. The so-called school of higher criticism assumed to dissect the Scriptures and assign various portions to original anonymous sources and it also separated supposed glosses from the basic texts. They did these things on the basis of differences in idiom or style of language.

This was not really a general characteristic of the nineteenth century and the impact of it did not create a crisis in the church as a whole until about the first quarter of the twentieth century. This was especially true as to the laity of the church who knew little of it and reacted to it somewhat like Mark Twain, the great American humorist of that day, who facetiously remarked that these would-be wise men had assumed to discover that the last part of the book of Isaiah was not written by Isaiah but by another writer of the same name.

These theories were in fact comparatively little known to, or at least little regarded by, the general ministry of that period. Perhaps as a consequence they were little exhibited to the laity.

Such an extremely modernistic work as Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, for example, which went far beyond the teachings of higher criticism and which undertook to establish the "mythical" origin and growth of much of the contents of the Gospels, was practically unknown to laymen in America in the nineteenth century even though it had been published before the middle of the century in Germany.

Along with higher criticism has gone textual criticism of Scripture, which is a perfectly appropriate science but which occasionally adds to the uncertainty in the minds of many regarding the integrity of our Bible, thereby abetting the tendency of higher criticism to unsettle and even to contradict statements of the books themselves as to authorship. The common people, whether justifiably or not, have seen both higher and textual criticism as undermining the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures.

Accompanying this criticism, which has had its principal impact in the half century recently closed, there has been an attempt to trace parts of the subject matter of Scripture to extraneous sources. With a strange casualness, similarities between the events recorded in the Bible and the myths and legends of other religions have been by some ascribed to an appropriation from the other religions by the writers of the Bible.

For example, legends of a garden of paradise and of a world-wide flood in some other religions have been cited as the origins of the records of the Bible. The fact has been little noted that all races are descended from Adam and Noah and must therefore have traditions of the Garden of Eden and of the Deluge. No race or religion needed to copy such traditions from any other. Their variations

are due to the fact that they have been oral and not written for many centuries in most instances.<sup>1</sup> The surprising thing is that some Christian writers have attempted to accommodate Biblical subject matter to such theories.

The attacks by critics of the Scriptures have been offset by the impressive confirmations of Biblical records from the findings of archaeologists who have digged in the lands where the events referred to in Holy Writ took place. To the mind of the author it seems not merely fortunate but providential that the archaeological science and activities have been contemporaneous with the development of higher criticism. It is marvelous that not one discovery has tended to disprove the accuracy of the Bible but that many have confirmed it.

We do not know of any cases where the Bible has been proved wrong.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Frederick Kenyon, former director and principal librarian of the British museum, in his recent book, *The Bible and Archaeology*, corroborates this statement as follows:

Besides confirming the traditional dating, and thereby also the authenticity of the canonical books [of the New Testament], the new evidence tends to confirm the general integrity of the text as it has come down to us. . . . The last foundation for any

1. If the writers of Scripture had not been inspired but had had to depend upon oral traditions concerning the creation, for example, it is surprising to note how few persons would have been necessary to complete the chain of transmittal, thereby minimizing the possibility of errors. "According to the Hebrew text, followed by our version, we may by computation find, that the original revelation made to Adam, might be transmitted to Abram, at above two thousand years' distance, through only two intermediate persons. Adam lived till Methuselah was two hundred and forty-three years old; and Methuselah died when Shem was about one hundred, who lived almost as long as Abraham" (Rev. Thomas Scott, D.D., in note on p. 69, Vol. III of *The Comprehensive Commentary of the Bible*, 1885).

2. Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology in Bible History* (1950), p. 134.

doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established. . . . The ordinary student of the Bible may be thankful for the constant increments of knowledge which serve to establish our study of the Scriptures on a firm foundation, and by which both the Old Testament and the New have greatly gained during the last generation.<sup>3</sup>

Archaeologists are continuing their work, and further proof of the antiquity of various portions of the Bible in their present form has apparently been discovered since Kenyon's book was published in 1940. For example, in the spring of 1947 it is reported that a Bedouin following a straying goat on cliffs overlooking the Dead Sea discovered a cave containing ancient manuscripts in earthen jars. In 1952 the writer was shown the location of the cliffs when on a tour of the Near East but did not go to the site of the discovery.

These manuscripts, written mostly on leather, contain passages from the Scriptures and are now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Much of them is in the Hebrew language. A sheepskin scroll contains "the entire Hebrew text of Isaiah."<sup>4</sup>

The Old Testament section of the Standard Bible Committee had access to the Isaiah scroll when preparing that book for the Revised Standard Version.<sup>5</sup> In view of it the Committee is said to have made "only about fourteen minor readings," which makes the scroll a practical confirmation of the "substantial accuracy of the masoretic text as it has been known since the tenth century A. D."<sup>6</sup> Its variations called for only "minor changes."

3. Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, pp. 288-89, 302.

4. John C. Trever, Acting Director pro tem of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, in *The Christian Century*, July 12, 1950, pp. 840-42.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

The Isaiah scroll copy of the Dead Sea Scrolls was made about the second century B. C. according to recent opinion of archaeologists,<sup>7</sup> and is said to be "the oldest Bible manuscript in existence in any language."<sup>8</sup> Another document is in Aramaic, the language which Jesus spoke, and is the first religious document ever found in that language of a time near to His life on earth.<sup>9</sup> It may assist scholars in further knowledge of that language, especially as used in religious discourse.

Since Jesus on many occasions confirmed the authority and accuracy of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, it is most satisfying to Christians to see new evidence being produced that the text we now have is substantially the same as that to which He referred. No important deviation has ever been found.

It is interesting to note in this connection that a radio chemist (nuclear scientist) at Chicago University in 1951 made an attempt to determine the age of the scroll material on which these manuscripts were written, or rather of the wrappings in which they were found. He took portions of the linen wrappings in which "the scrolls were stored, burned them to pure carbon, then measured the radioactivity of the carbon-14 in a special Geiger counter, arriving at the conclusion that the flax from which the linen was made was alive and breathing 1,917 years ago," or "in the year A. D. 34, approximate date of the Crucifixion," but, as the chemist said, "allowance must be made for a margin of error of a century or two either way." The magazine, *Popular Science Monthly*, (Dec., 1951) commented on this experiment as follows:

Cosmic rays that bombarded the earth when Christ was born have left behind a coded message for nuclear physicists to decipher.<sup>10</sup>

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *The Church Herald*, Jan. 18, 1952.

Similar to the effect of what many have regarded as direct attacks upon the Scriptures in recent years has been the impact upon the minds of many laymen of the theories of secular scientists that the earth has existed hundreds of thousands, or perhaps millions, of years instead of the traditional six thousand years. In our day these variant assertions have been presented to children in their public school textbooks, and outstanding leaders of religious education have set them forth in church school lessons for children and young people. (Again it should be said that no attempt is here made to determine the soundness of these theories. They are mentioned solely because they create religious crises).

Awareness of the explanation that the Bible itself does not give the date of the creation recorded in it, as well as of the explanation attempted by many that the theory of evolution of species may be reconciled with the record of creation in the Bible, does not dispose of the fact that these theories have created crises in religion. Charles Darwin, the secular scientist, and Herbert Spencer, who transplanted the theory of evolution to the realm of philosophy, have in the first half of the twentieth century posed problems for religion.

This crisis-period in religion has strewn the stream of Christian literature with such book titles as *Have We Outgrown Religion?*, *The Ordeal of Western Religion*, and *The Return to Religion*. These are evidences of the existence and effects of crises.

An outstanding religious periodical a few years ago featured articles by prominent theologians of this crisis-period on the subject of the nature of God. The condition of crisis from the standpoint of traditional religion was evidenced by the fact that the writers agreed in method since none of them used the Bible as the ultimate authority on the subject. Some of them apparently concluded that God is not a Person.

The terminology of those who have taken positions variant from historical Christianity has been sometimes very confusing, in that premises have often been couched in the language of historic creeds but without the same meaning. For example, the term "divine" has been applied to merely human traits, or otherwise so used that reference to the divinity of Jesus Christ no longer necessarily means His deity. Similarly the word "inspiration" and other words of formerly definite religious meaning have no longer necessarily the same meaning.

In view of this it is most reassuring to see evidence of commitment to traditional orthodoxy in the language of the constitution of the World Council of Churches that Jesus Christ is "God and Saviour." Of course, this commitment was necessary in order to receive the support from some present-day influential European religious leaders, irrespective of the fact that many American leaders would also have insisted upon it. This incident does not actually confirm the fact, but it has seemed to the layman that the recent era of liberal theology has had its existence principally in the United States, just as the nineteenth-century era of higher criticism had its existence principally in Germany.

This crisis-period in religion was, it seems, exemplified at its peak in this country by the project known as "Re-Thinking Missions," the title given to the report of the "Appraisal Commission of the Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry" in 1932. We are now far enough from that incident to appraise the "Appraisal."

It was the apparent assumption of some dominating personalities in the formulation of that document that Christianity was no longer to be regarded as the only true faith but as merely "a faith" and that conversion to Christianity is not essential to salvation. As a result the "Re-Thinking" report surprisingly minimizes the traditional emphasis on evangelism and in effect advances so-

cial improvement, food production, and humanitarian activities as of paramount importance. Few question that all of these are appropriate in missionary programs and especially medical and educational activities had long been used, but to many the recommended new emphasis seemed revolutionary.

As a part of the crisis in religion in the last half century there has been a most revolutionary change in Christian preaching. Not all ministers followed the new system but all were affected by it to some extent, at least to the extent of change of emphasis and the omitting of certain subjects. This changed style in preaching stressed the leadership instead of the deity of Jesus and He was no longer presented as the only way of salvation. It omitted the supernatural, the miraculous, the prophetic. It has been defined by a dean emeritus of an outstanding theological school as follows:

I never urge anyone to believe in the great spiritual objectives because the Bible says so, or because the church says so. I ceased many years ago to believe in any form of religion which rests its claim on external authority. . . . It will be understood that I am not quoting these passages of Scripture as having final authority. . . . We have moved quite away from the habit of trying to settle vital questions (even in the realm of morals and religion) by quoting chapter and verse.<sup>11</sup>

These words were published in 1932. What a radical departure from all previous preaching of Christian ministers! No theologian or minister of the Christian religion could have made such statements and retained good standing in any of our historic denominations in any age except the last half century. Imagine Augustine or Luther, Calvin or Knox, Jonathan Edwards or Finney,

11. Charles R. Brown, *Have We Outgrown Religion?* pp. 10, 186, 184.

Spurgeon or Moody, or any of the great preachers of the past, preaching without appealing to Scripture for authority and without presenting the prophecies and miracles of the Bible.

That type of preaching has characterized the phase of the crisis period known as "liberalism," of which the so-called "social gospel" has been a prominent part. That phase was seemingly based to a considerable extent upon the premise that man is naturally good and progress is practically inevitable if church members take a more active role in social affairs, thereby improving their environment.

It is apparently being succeeded among its adherents by a phase known as neo-orthodoxy which holds more to traditional tenets except that it accepts much of higher criticism's evaluation of the Scriptures. Conservatives welcome this development as toward orthodoxy.

This era of crisis has produced a new phenomenon of disunity. There are those in the church who believe in historic Christianity, (a superhuman religion, based on a Divinely inspired Bible and a Divine Saviour), and those who in varying degrees rationalize, secularize, and socialize the gospel. This has caused discord within denominations.

In the last half century there have also been other less vital elements of crisis. For example, we have experienced changes in social practices. Since moral standards are a constituent of Christianity these changes are very relevant to its integrity and prosperity. At the beginning of the century many amusements were regarded as worldly and tending to sin which later have been not only countenanced but have been sponsored even in church buildings. At the beginning of the century sports and commercialized amusements on the Sabbath were taboo for most Christians. Today they are supported by some and little

is said about it. Sunday movies and even the Sunday newspaper have had great effect on church attendance.

The country church in this half century has suffered the dislocation which is incident to the modern means of transportation, the automobile. With paved roads the motor vehicle has measurably eliminated distance. As a consequence the country church, which in the past furnished more outstanding leaders, proportionately, than other types of churches, has been in a decline.

The requirements of the industrial age have contributed to the difficulty of maintaining family religion. It is a common impression that the practice of family worship has declined.

The issues involved in this half century of crisis in religion have perhaps been greater than those of any other period since the Protestant Reformation. Indeed, it has been said that "the Reformation itself was a revolt more distinctively against the abuses than against the doctrines of the Church." There are no issues more basic, from the standpoint of the relevance of religion to the origin and development of the American way of life, than those involved in questions as to the inspiration of the Scriptures and the deity of Jesus Christ.

There are other "signs of the times" which may be briefly mentioned. One of them is the apparent resurgence in Protestant churches of interest in liturgies and symbols, including the cross and pictures of Jesus. Appraisal of this phenomenon will not be attempted but caution is suggested in view of the historic position of Protestantism as succinctly stated in the Westminster Confession as follows:

The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representa-

tion, or any other way not prescribed in the holy scripture.<sup>12</sup>

The impact of these crises during this half century has been less upon the more conservative communions, among whom the doctrinal phases of crisis have scarcely existed at all although their spiritual condition has been modified by the surcharged atmosphere surrounding them. The Christian Church and religion have withstood the storm. The peak of the crisis has long since passed. There is everywhere evidence of a tendency to return to traditional Christianity.

We have not really finished our review of religious conditions in the nineteenth century, which was a great century. Great movements originated, or had their greatest development, in it, including the modern foreign mission movement of Protestant denominations, mid-week prayer meetings, Young Men's Christian Associations, Young Women's Christian Associations, the Sabbath school, young people's societies, the Student Volunteer Movement, the temperance movement, the great campaigns of mass evangelism. What a pregnant century! The Christian Church reached great maturity in that era. God in His providence was preparing her to withstand the great crises of the later period.

Perhaps it is a testimony to the soundness of the Church in the nineteenth century that no new Protestant sect arose in the last third of that century.<sup>13</sup> This cannot be said of the half century just closed in which the instinct for the superhuman in religion, recently emphasized less in some older denominations, has given rise to several new sects.

It has been said that the great increase in church membership in the United States refutes the claim that we have been passing through a religious crisis. To ap-

12. Chapter XXI, sec. I.

13. Harris, *A Century's Change in Religion*, p. 84.

praise this fact several considerations are relevant. It should be noted that this increase has been accompanied by a notable increase in tolerance in the churches of the departure from traditional doctrines by persons in places of leadership. This has been manifested in such strategic places as professorships in theological seminaries and high offices in church bodies. It has also been accompanied by increased participation by church members in amusements traditionally regarded as inconsistent with Christian living or as tending to sinful conduct. Some such amusements have even been sponsored by church auspices.

These innovations in vital matters are regarded by many as part of a continuing crisis in the Christian religion. They have, from the uniform traditional viewpoint, lowered the spiritual status of the Christian constituency. Discipline of church members and church officers for conduct and belief varying from church standards has been universally relaxed, which makes it easier to belong to a church.

The increase in church membership has proceeded to the extent that on December 31, 1954, 60.3 per cent of the population of the continental United States were church members. (More recent figures indicate that it now exceeds 63 per cent.) A century ago the figure was less than 20 per cent.<sup>14</sup> This is evidence that "the church has been winning the United States. Does it show that religion has been winning it, that religion has become more vital in the life of the average American?"

George W. Cornell noted:

By practically every tangible yardstick, the nation's major faiths, Judaism and Christianity, are enjoying unparalleled success—in membership, attendance, growth, building expansion, finances and prestige. Moreover, the subject of God has become

14. *Christian Century*, Sept. 7, 1955, p. 1011.

fashionable — in print, song and sitting-room conversation.

But what all this means is a matter of some troubled questioning. Is society becoming more churchly, or the church more like society? Are people really committing themselves personally, or just conforming to the crowd? Is religion exacting its full demands or merely adapting itself to please?<sup>15</sup>

The question in many thoughtful minds is whether this mid-century boom in institutional religion indicates a corresponding upsurge of vital religion. . . . Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, . . . president of the National Council of Churches, fears that "religion is in danger of becoming a national fad," and warns ministers against "complacency about their big congregations." "Many people with a new religious faith," he says, "are attempting to turn that interest into magic — to use God for their own purposes, rather than to serve God and find his purpose."<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Henry Smith Leiper of New York, executive secretary of the Congregational Christian Churches' Missions Council, has noted that "Christians give to the churches about two per cent of their incomes," and deplores "the fact that two-thirds of the Christians never give anything for work outside their own parish."<sup>17</sup>

"It is reliably stated that only one American in two has any relationship with a religious group, and that of those who do have, only one out of two takes this relationship seriously. After looking into the hearts of men for thirty-five years, I believe that, if anything, this is an overstatement. Men are indifferent to God," said Dr. Harrison Ray Anderson, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago.<sup>18</sup>

As to the effective vitality of religion in American life,

15. *Des Moines Tribune*, Jan. 2, 1956.

16. *The United Presbyterian*, Jan. 9, 1956, p. 4.

17. *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1955.

18. Harrison Ray Anderson, *God's Way*, p. 39.

attention may be called to the fact of the enormous increase in crime and drunkenness, in juvenile delinquency and in divorces. This increase has not been merely in total figures but in proportion to the population.

The state of religion in Christian countries is also no doubt reflected in the world-wide state of Christianity. The number of Protestant missionaries in foreign nations has increased 25 per cent since 1952, "but the relative number of Christians in the world has been dropping steadily for many years. In 1930 it was generally estimated that 37 per cent of the world's population was Christian; in 1956 this had dropped to 30 per cent."<sup>19</sup>

A crisis if often of short duration. That a crisis should have lasted for half a century has been a trying experience to the Christian Church. However, the Church is undefeated. In many sectors she has been practically undamaged. Her general effectiveness has been in some respects even strengthened. For example, her social activities have been greatly enlarged. The future is now more promising than at any time during the entire period of crisis.

Of course, in true perspective it is evident that the organism which Jesus called His Church could not have failed, cannot fail. Its future is assured. He said: "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Having survived the crises of the last half century it is indisputable that the Church has a Divine vitality.

It has been proved a mistake to attempt to promote

19. Wilbur M. Smith, D.D., in *The Sunday School Times*, July 13, 1957, p. 549. "The overseas missions department of the Methodist Conference of Great Britain drew attention to the 'grave problem' of Asian religions and the swift increase of the world's population, which 'makes Christians a steadily diminishing proportion of the human race.' Basil Clutterbuck, department secretary, said that 'if we measure the Christian church in the world on the yardstick of numbers, it is losing ground all along the line' (*The Christian Century*, Aug. 7, 1957, p. 933).

Christianity by making it over. Greatest progress can now be made by reconstruction. New techniques may be used but it is the old-time religion we should promote.

When anything is advanced as something new in the essence of religion, the term itself is self-contradictory. If it is the true religion it has been always the same and it will be always the same. Truth in religion is absolute, constant, and eternal.

The God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament. All are saved by faith in the same Christ; those before He came looked forward through Divinely prescribed types and laid hold of the prophecies of His coming, and those since His coming look back to His accomplished work. This is more adequately expressed in the most outstanding work on theology of the nineteenth century, that of Charles Hodge, as follows:

The plan of salvation has been the same from the beginning. There is the same promise of deliverance from the evils of the apostacy, the same Redeemer, the same condition required for participation in the blessings of redemption, and the same complete salvation for all who embrace the offers of divine mercy.

In determining the degree of knowledge possessed by the ancient people of God, we are not to be governed by our own capacity of discovering from the Old Testament Scriptures the doctrines of grace. What amount of supplementary instruction the people received from the prophets, or what degree of divine illumination was granted to them we cannot tell. It is, however, clear from the writings of the New Testament, that the knowledge of the plan of salvation current among the Jews at the time of the advent, was much greater than we should deem possible from the mere perusal of the Old Testament. They not only generally and confidently expected the Messiah, who was to be a teacher as well as a deliverer, but the devout Jews waited for the salvation of Israel. They spoke familiarly of the Holy Spirit and of the baptism which he was to effect, as

Christians do. It is, principally, from expositions of the ancient Scriptures, that we learn the amount of truth revealed to those who lived before the coming of Christ.

From the Scriptures, therefore, as a whole, from the New Testament, and from the Old as interpreted by infallible authority in the New, we learn that the plan of salvation has always been one and the same; having the same promise, the same Saviour, the same condition, and the same salvation.

That the promise was the same to those who lived before the advent that it is to us, is plain. Immediately after the fall God gave to Adam the promise of redemption. That promise was contained in the prediction that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. . . .

There is not a doctrine concerning Christ, taught in the New Testament, which the Apostles do not affirm to have been revealed under former dispensations.<sup>20</sup>

When the Apostle wrote that "if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (Heb. 8:7), he did not mean that the old was imperfect or defective but only that the new was more complete, fuller in manifestation. It was a part of his explanation of the fact that the priesthood and sacrifices of the old dispensation were but types of the more excellent priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

Was God unfair in withholding from ancient generations the fuller revelations of the new dispensation, leaving them to depend upon types and promises? No, He supplemented their knowledge and experience with theophanies, miracles, revelations, and prophecies in process of fulfillment.

Was God, then, over-generous in giving to the people of Jesus' day the physical presence of the Saviour and

20. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 367-68, 370.

the great concomitant blessings? No, they had these transcendent blessings only as accompanied by scorn and persecution.

We, in our day, do not have theophanies, nor continuing revelations, nor working of miracles, nor the physical presence of Christ, but we have the Gospel in its completeness and we have the experience of the Holy Spirit. God in His providence has been uniformly just in blessing every generation of men.

This was the faith of the majority of the founders of the early colonies. This was the force which as an incident to its main spiritual purpose directed and produced the distinctives of American civilization. The importance of safeguarding its integrity and its efficiency cannot be overestimated. Nothing else is so essential to the preservation of the American way.

## IX

### *A SYNONYM FOR HAPPINESS*

The right of the "pursuit of happiness" has been enshrined in our Declaration of Independence as one of the central themes of the American way. However, experience has proved that in the attainment of happiness more is involved than the necessary formulae for freedom in the documents of civil government. Consciously or unconsciously philosophy and religion are essential to its successful pursuit.

A priceless expediency in such pursuit is orientation. To have a preliminary sense of where we are, of the conditions surrounding and confronting us and of our direction and destination is a prerequisite to utmost satisfaction in living.

It is our great good fortune that in our civilization to everyone is available the accumulated wisdom of former generations. This fund of knowledge, including not only facts ascertained but also appraisals of such facts by those preceding us, is of inestimable value.

To know ahead of time what is important, what prospective problems and dangers there are and what solutions and safeguards are recommended in this accumulated heritage enables each generation to start where the last left off. It also gives direction and reassurance to those resorting to it at every stage of life.

Every young person should start life with the assumption that the established and the commonly accepted principles of government, economics, and religion in his contemporary world, the principles of its way of life, are sound and correct. This expediency will lessen the oc-

casions when he will be embarrassed by the necessity of changing his mind.

An impressive thinker once said that "no person has a right to be radical in the beginning of his life." His basic impulse should be gratitude for the priceless blessings he enjoys and this should suggest caution in espousing changes. In any event, a good working rule is to assume that the status quo is probably all right.

This does not foreclose re-examination of the facts but it is the most satisfying hypothesis upon which to proceed. Every scientist must have basic hypotheses on which investigation is to proceed.

A fact as to which there should be no problem of adjustment is that there are constant patterns in human nature. As noted in a former chapter, human nature has been always the same within the whole period of recorded history. Failure to realize this sometimes leads young people to think that their parents do not understand them. The fact is that father and mother probably understand them better than they understand themselves.

One of the most basic admonitions of parents to children is to "be good." This prime necessity of satisfying living deserves careful consideration. To know the components of what is good as well as to know the motivations toward it is important not only for parents but for all persons in all stations and ages — for the building and maintenance of their own personal character and conduct and for living with others.

For this discussion it is assumed that the standard of goodness for any particular life is that which he finds in the counsel of his home and church. Now, what are the elements of human nature which control him in attaining or missing the goal of goodness? What is it that makes men good? That is one of the most fundamental problems of human existence.

In the one-room schoolhouses of the Midwest of half a

century ago it was the practice to have occasional literary programs, including the art of debate. A topic sometimes used for that purpose was: Resolved, That the fear of punishment has greater effect in making men good than has the hope of reward.

That question does not include all elements of inducement to goodness but it suggests the two perhaps most commonly realized or suggested. They deserve careful consideration.

To begin, let us consider the fear of punishment as a human motive. If a man were considering committing the sin of drunkenness, for example, the contemplation of what penalties would deter him? And what would be their relative effectiveness? The first punishment he considered might be the physical punishment. He knows there will probably be a headache, a hangover, and if he repeats often enough there will be *delerium tremens* and ultimately settled insanity. This might make him hesitate, but perhaps he is of rugged constitution and has apparently recovered from former debauches; and he looks about him and sees others who, for a longer time than he, have apparently escaped substantial impairment of health. So he may not be deterred by the thought of the physical penalty.

Then he might consider the civil penalty. It is a crime before the law to become drunk. But he may plan to do it out of sight of the policeman and so not get caught, or he may be a friend of the cop and expect favorable treatment. So he may not be surely deterred by the thought of the civil penalty.

He may also consider the social penalty. It is a disgrace in the eyes of one's friends to become drunk, especially if he has the right kind of friends. Particularly, he may think of his family, his wife, his mother, his sweetheart, in whose favor he will be lowered by such disgusting conduct. This will often deter him, but this

time he is forty miles from home and thinks he can conceal his sin from his friends. So he may not be deterred by contemplation of the social penalty.

Lastly, if not sooner, he would think of the religious penalty, disfavor with his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. He knows that it is written, "Know ye not that the unrighteous . . . nor drunkards . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-10). He knows that his acts cannot escape an omnipresent, all-seeing, omnipotent God who will certainly punish his sin and the punishment will be severe.

So, especially if he is a devout Christian, he would be deterred by contemplation of the religious penalty. The religious penalty is the most effective to make men good.

If we now consider the rewards for being good, our man in temptation would contemplate the physical reward. Temperate living promotes and preserves health and beauty. But our imaginary man is perhaps in good health and it is a fact that when health is good we give the least thought to its care. This reward would get little consideration. The same is true of the civil reward for being a good, law-abiding citizen with possibilities even of political preferment. He would regard it lightly and, in any event, we have recently been in a period of political conditions when intemperance is winked at as never before.

As to the social reward, the same considerations apply. Apparently there is more acceptance of intemperance in social circles than ever before.

So our man under stress of temptation is not effectually deterred by hope of the physical, civil, or social rewards. But when it comes to the religious reward, here he feels stronger inducement.

If he is a devout Christian he values the joy and inward peace of a clear conscience, together with the blessed hope of an eternal life of happiness. The hope of

that reward is the strongest to keep him from deviation from the good life. It is evident that the religious penalty and the religious reward are stronger than any others to make men good. Men will be good also from an admiration of that which is good, especially if they are Christians. In this also religion offers the highest good, the most noble objectives and patterns.

But all of these considerations are below the higher levels of human life. They are about as far as the secular science of ethics goes, as an examination of such a standard work as Mackenzie's *Manuel of Ethics* will demonstrate.

Let us look at the noblest impulse of human nature which is love. Out of love for certain persons men will try to be good. For example, out of love for his wife or mother, or sweetheart, a man will be good, to please her and hold her esteem and attachment and to keep her from the pain of disappointment.

Here again religion furnishes the highest inducement to goodness, namely the love for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who out of love gave His life to save men from their sins. But this is not all. The Divine Spirit comes into the heart and life of every devout Christian to give guidance and power. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

As has been already said in a previous chapter, there is no sure basis for morality except religion. The activation of the Christian conscience and the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian are the main impetus, strength, and safeguard of the good life.

"Well," you may say, "that proves it, but what of it? What is the use of being good?"

That suggests another question. What is your ambition in life? What is your dominant purpose? Is it to acquire money and wealth? Is it to acquire knowledge for its own sake? Is it to become famous? Is it to become popular?

Now, you may answer some or all of these questions in the affirmative. But then I will say that you have not given the correct, or at least not the complete or ultimate, answer. I do not question that you are desiring or striving for these things. I do not dispute that as far as your consciousness is concerned you seek them as an end in themselves. But I still maintain that in reality you are seeking some or all of these things because of an unconscious assumption or belief that they will bring you happiness. It is happiness that you are really pursuing. The "pursuit of happiness" is declared to be an "unalienable right" of all men by the Declaration of Independence. You will note the reading. It is only the right to "pursue" happiness that is declared. It was not until comparatively recently that some have apparently conceived it to be the function of government to guarantee the attainment, the possession, of happiness to citizens.

Happiness is a state desired by all. However, neither government nor any external instrumentality can provide and assure it. Permanent happiness can come only as an incident to commitment to noble objectives, and these objectives must be of lasting nature. To be always happy one must be committed to things one can always have.

If a person sets his heart principally upon things that are temporary or uncertain he is destined to be disappointed. If he sets his heart upon the pleasures of the senses and passions, upon fame, popularity, public office, power, wealth, he will wake up some morning and find that the object of his heart's desire has flown away and vanished. But if he sets it upon friendships, good books, service to his fellow men, the experiences of the good life,

the worship and service of God, then he can always have these to enjoy and he will be always happy.

Oftentimes we may be ready to conclude that some other person must be happier than we are. We think that if we had the wealth, or fine clothes, or high office, or popularity of that person then we would be happier. The fact of the matter is that no one, no matter what his station or position in life, is happier than we are unless he is a better Christian. This is inherent in the human constitution as God made it. It is intrinsic, inescapable and invariable. It is a part of the very nature of man.

Goodness and happiness are practical synonyms, that is, they are inevitably coexistent. This fact of life is admirably set forth in the first Psalm.

Blessed [that is, happy] is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so. . . . For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish (Ps. 1:1-6).

Happiness is the most universal desire of humanity. It is unattainable by seeking it directly. It comes as a by-product of noble purpose faithfully pursued. It is an inevitable incident of the good life. It is inseparable from right living. This is the most valuable lesson for a satisfying life that anyone ever learns.

"He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour (Prov. 21:21).

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of

days is in her right hand ; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her : and happy is every one that retaineth her (Prov. 3:13-18).

Jesus taught the same in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12). Paraphrasing them we might read them as follows :

Happy are they who do not think highly of themselves and, therefore, are not bound to be disappointed in not receiving all they expected. They are fit for heaven itself.

Happy are they who are tender of conscience which makes them sorry for their sin, for they shall be comforted with pardon, peace, joy, and assurance of eternal consolation.

Happy are the gentle, teachable, and forgiving, for their health, wealth, and safety in the world are thereby promoted.

Happy are they who have holy appetites for all spiritual qualities and blessings, for they shall be filled with grace and felicity and be perfected in holiness.

Happy are they who have pity, for they shall have one of the purest delights in the world, that of doing good, and they shall have mercy from God Himself.

Happy are the holy, for they shall see God, which is the perfection of happiness.

Happy are they who love peace and promote it, for God Himself shall own them as His children.

Happy are they who suffer for righteousness' sake, for they have a title to heaven itself ; and exceedingly happy are they who are falsely spoken against and taunted for Christ's sake and yet stand firm, for they will be rewarded like the prophets of old.

These paradoxes teach us that happiness is a by-product of goodness and serious purpose. Happiness is to be devoutly desired but it is not attainable by seeking it by itself. It must not be our chief end.

What is the chief end of man ?

Man's chief end is to glorify God and [incidentally] to enjoy him forever (Westminster Shorter

Catechism No. 1 which was extensively memorized by the children of the colonists).

Be devout and you will be happy! These are empiric synonyms.

The founders of our American way of life have handed down to us an example of experience in attempting to live according to this epitome of superhuman wisdom. They did not understand fully nor practice perfectly the philosophy which possessed their minds but they had the right idea.

We can profit by their mistakes, but we cannot improve upon their objective and probably not upon their consecration to it. Commitment to the Divine way was the formula of the founders of the American way.<sup>1</sup>

1. "Western Christendom must make a new attempt 'to reconsecrate man's work to God's service.' Dr. Arnold Toynbee, famed British historian, told a 'Church and Work Congress' sponsored here (Albany, New York) by Albany Episcopal Diocese, 'Man at work can be happy and spiritually healthy only if he feels that he is working in God's world for God's glory through doing what is God's will. . . . It seems certain, on the evidence of past history, that man's work can be healthy and beneficent only when it is part — and a subordinate part — of man's religion. When work has been divorced from religion, work has always become demonic and destructive'" (*The United Presbyterian*, Nov. 14, 1955, p. 5).

# X

## *AFTERTHOUGHT*

The record of the history of the United States makes it evident that at most crucial moments events have repeatedly turned upon facts which were beyond the plans or efforts of the men engaged. But for these interventions the civilization, economic system, government, and prevailing religion of America would be vastly different. As one surveys the world today he is convinced that they would be not only different but also much inferior. Nowhere on earth does an American see conditions for which he would be willing to exchange the American way of life.

The facts assembled in this brief treatise demonstrate that the central themes of the American way are either directly religious or are related to religion as by-products or inevitable incidents. No other single factor, not even all other factors combined, have been so directly responsible for this development as has been the Christian religion.

Not only the colonization and establishment of the nation, but also the form and principles of its government and the dynamics of its economic system came primarily and dominantly from religion. The spirit of tolerance unexcelled elsewhere in the world is most securely buttressed upon the religious tenet of the sacredness and inviolability of the individual personality.

Public institutions for the care of the mentally and physically sick, orphanages and organizations for relief of the poor (later largely taken over by governmental agencies) have been the fruit of Christianity. They did

not exist before the Christian era anywhere in the world to any substantial extent and they have little development even today except where founded by Christians or through Christian example and influence. This phase of American civilization is unexcelled elsewhere in the world.

The greatest impulse for education came from religion. Common education was instituted originally in order that people generally might be enabled to read the Scriptures for themselves. And in order that men might be prepared for the Christian ministry colleges for higher education were established. Reformed churchmen were the promoters of these institutions.

Religion has dominated the social life of the United States. Church buildings have been the chief social centers of American communities. Not only have church buildings been used for sociability and entertainment for the members and adherents of the congregations but for all, rich and poor, who wished to participate. In addition to the accomplishment of their primary purposes no more effective promotion of the democratic spirit has existed in local communities than these activities.

The quality of altruism among American people generally has set up and supported community organizations for character building, education of youth and adults, and even for amusement available to everyone. It has also enabled the government of the United States to aid the populations of other nations with gratuities from American public revenues, thereby introducing into human history an entirely new development. The phenomenon of a nation giving rather than getting has never been known in any previous era. Of the same altruistic nature have been the acts of America in voluntarily granting independence to Cuba and the Philippines, neither of which could by force have secured it from so powerful a nation.

It seems most appropriate that our first President should be quoted as our last authority on the indispen-

sable nature of the contribution of religion to the support of general morality and happiness. George Washington said in his Farewell Address:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion, and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens. . . .

Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion . . . . reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.<sup>1</sup>

These themes constitute the essential substance of the American way. The conceptions were indigenous fruits of the life and experience under the unique circumstances in the colonies and in the new nation. Added to a primary spiritual philosophy there was the accretion from the environment, even from the necessities of adjustment to conditions which never existed elsewhere.

Since we love the American way and know its origin, our chief concern should be to protect and promote the most effective element of its development. We are challenged to this by a realization of the fact that religion has been subjected to crisis after crisis in the last half century. Nothing is so important to the permanence of the American way of life as making it more Christian according to its historic type. Thus will be preserved the felicity and even the prosperity of this, the nearest ideal social, economic and civic structure and life the world has ever seen in any community. When the French historian Guizot many years ago asked James Russell Lowell how long in his opinion the American Republic would last,

1. *Harvard Classics*, Vol. 43, p. 260.

Lowell is reported to have said: "It will last as long as the ideals of its founders remain dominant."

America needs a rebirth of faith!

America needs a renewed sense of mission!

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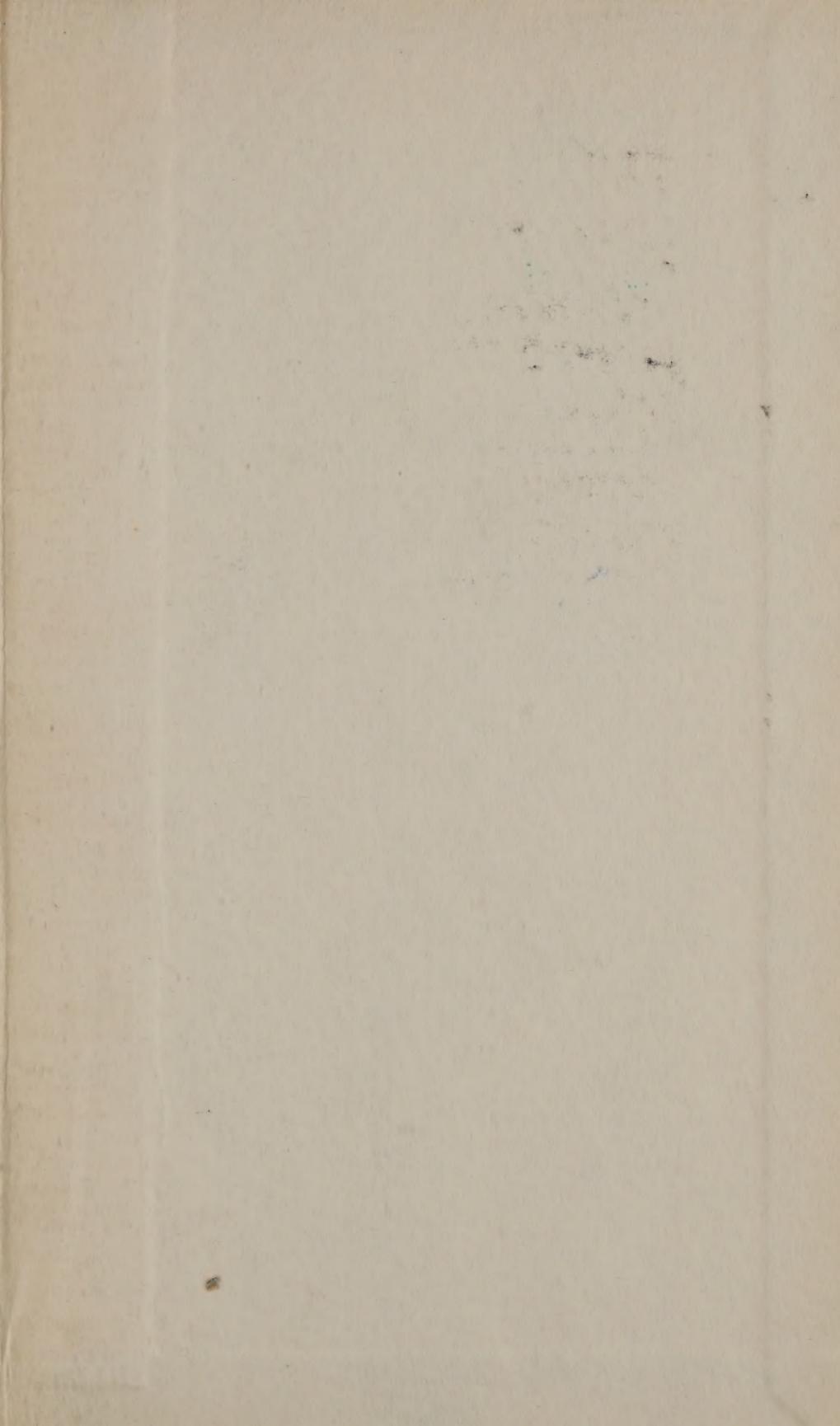
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